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RECORD

OF

*Roman*  
Ancient Histories,

Entituled in Latin,

*Gesta Romanorum.*

Discourſing of ſundry Ex-  
amples, for the advancement  
of Vertue, and the aban-  
doning of Vice.

Very pleaſant in Reading, and  
profitable in practice.

L O N D O N,

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF

*Gesta Romanorum.*

The Argument.

Man is dearly beloved of God the Father ;  
And yet for sundry good graces she is tempted  
of the Devil by three divers means, at three se-  
veral Ages in this mortal life ; if she resist and  
overcome the same, she is hereby adopted to  
the fruition of matrimonial joy in Heaven,  
with Christ the Son of God.

*Jean* The first History. *Chiburnham*

Sometimes there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperour which had a faire creature to his Daughter named Atalana, whom divers great Lords, and many Noble Knights desired to have to Wife. This Atalana was wondrous swift of Foot : wherefore such a Law was made, that no man should have her to Wife, except he could out-run her, and take her by swiftness of foot. At besel, that many came to run with her,

## The History of

but could not overtake her. At the last there came a Knight named Pomeis unto her Father, and said to him, My Lord if it please you to give me your Daughter to Wife I will run with her. Then said her Father, there is a Law made, that whosoever will have her to Wife, must first run with her, and if he overtake her not, he shall lose his head, and if he overtake her, then shall I wed her unto him.

The Emperor had told the peril that might fall in the winning of her, the Knight voluntarily granted for to abide that jeopardy. Then the Knight provided him three Balls of Gold against the running. And when they had begun to run a little space, the young Lady over-run him: then the Knight threw forth before her the first ball of Gold, and when the Damsel saw the Ball, she stooped and took it up, and in the mean while the Knight got before her: but that prevailed little, for when she perceived it, she ran so fast, that in short space she got before him again. And then he threw forth the second ball of gold, and she stooped as she did before and took it up, and in that while the Knight got before her again: which this young Damsel seeing, constrained her self, and ran so fast that she soon had him at advantage again, and was before him: now by that time they were nigh the mark, whereby they should abide, wherefore the Knight threw

threw forth the third ball before her, and she stooped down to take up the ball, and while she was taking up the third ball, the Knight got before her, and was first at the mark, and thus was she won.

## The Moral.

By this Emperour is understood the Father of Heaven, and by the Damsel is understood the Soul of man, with whom many Devils desire to deceive her through their temptation, but she withstandeth them mightily, and overcometh them. And when he hath done his worst and may not speed, then makes he three balls of Gold, and casteth them before in three ages of man, that is to say, in youth, in manhood, and in old age. In youth the Devil casteth the ball of lechery before her, that is to say, the desire of the flesh: nevertheless, for all this ball, oftentimes man overcometh the Devil by acknowledging of his sins to God, by hearty Repentance and amendment of life. The second ball is the ball of Pride, the which the Devil casteth to man in his manhood, that is to say, in his middle age; but this ball man oftentimes overcometh as he did the first, but let him beware of the third ball, which is covetousness, the Devil casteth to man in his old age, which is dreadful: for except a man may overcome this ball, with the other two, he shall

## The History of

lose his honour, that is to say, the Kingdom of Heaven. For when a man burneth in covetousness, he thinketh not upon Ghostly riches, (for ever his heart is set on worldly goods) and reckoneth not of prayers, nor of well doing, and thus loseth he his heritage, to the which God hath bought him with his precious blood: unto the which our Lord Jesus bring us all.

### The Argument.

As God allotteth divers men divers callings and estates of living in this World, so is every man tried by the rule of life and Doctrines, whether his practice agree with his profession, in profiting himself without prejudice to others, wherein if he so hold himself content, for such a Son the Heavenly Father hath planted a Tree of Heavenly Treasure, in the Life that shall be everlasting.

### The Second History.

**T**Here reigned sometime in Rome a wise and mighty Emperoz, named Anselm, who did bear in his arms a Shield of Silver with five red Roses: this Emperoz had three Sons whom he loved much: he had also continual War with the King of Egypt, in which War he lost all his temporal goods except a precious Tree. It fortun'd after on a day that he gave battel to the same King of Egypt wherein he was grievously wounded, nevertheless he obtained the victory, notwithstanding

ing he had his deadly wound: wherefore while he lay at point of death, he called unto his eldest Son, and said: My dear and well beloved Son, all my temporal riches are spent, and almost nothing is left me, but a precious Tree: the which stands in the midst of my Empire I give to thee all that is under the earth, and above the earth of the same Tree. O my reverend Father (quoth he) I thank you much.

Then said the Emperour, call to me my second Son. Anon the eldest Son greatly joying of his Fathers gift called in his Brother; and when he came, the Emperour said, my dear Son, I may not make my Testament, forasmuch as I have spent all my goods, except a Tree which standeth in the midst of mine Empire, of the which Tree, I bequeath to thee all that is great and small. Then answered he and said, My reverend Father I thank you much.

Then said the Emperour call to me my third Son, and so it was done. And when he was come, the Emperour said, My dear Son, I must die of these wounds, and I have only a precious tree, of which I have given thy brethren their portion, and to thee I bequeath thy portion: for I will that thou have of the said Tree all that is wet and dry. Then said his Son, Father I thank you. Soon after the Emperour had made his bequest, he died. And shortly after the eldest Son took possession of the tree,  
Now

## The History of

Now when the second Son heard this, he came to him, saying, my brother, by what law or title occupy you this Tree? Dear Brother, quoth he, I occupy it by this Title, my Father gave me all that is under the earth, and above of the said Tree, by reason thereof the Tree is mine. Unknowing to thee quoth the second Brother, he gave unto me all that is great and small of the said Tree, and therefore I have as great right in the Tree as you. This hearing the third Son, he came to them and said, my well beloved brethren it behooveth you not to strive for this Tree, for I have as much right in the Tree as ye, for by the law ye wot, that the last Will and Testament ought to stand, for of truth he gave me of the said tree all that is wet and dry, and therefore the Tree by right is mine: but for as much as your words are of great force, and mine also, my counsel is, that we be judged by reason: for it is not good nor commendable that strife or dissention should be among us. Here beside dwelleth a King full of Reason, therefore to avoid strife let us go to him, and each of us lay his right before him; and as he shall judge, let us stand to his judgment: then said his Brethren thy counsel is good, wherefore they went all three unto the King of Reason, and each of them severally sheweth forth his right unto him, as it is said before.

When



When the King had heard the Titles, he rerhearsed them all again severally: first, saying to the eldest Son thus: you say (qd. the King) that your Father gave you all that is under the earth and above the earth of the said Tree. And to the second Brother he bequeathed all that is great and small of that Tree. And to the third Brother he gave all that is wet and dry.

And with that he laid the law to them, and said, that this Will ought to stand.

Now my dear Friends, briefly I shall satisfy all your requests: and when he had thus said, he turned him unto the eldest Brother, saying, My dear Friend, if you list to abide the Judgment of right, it behoveth you to be letten blood of the right arm. My Lord, (quoth he) your will shall be done. Then the King called for a discret Physician, commanding him to let him blood.

When the eldest Son was letten blood, the King said unto them all three: My dear friends, Where is your Father buried: then answered they and said: forsooth my Lord, in such a place. Anon the King commanded to dig in the ground for the body, and to take a bone out of his breast, and to bury the body again: and so it was done. And when the bone was taken out, the King commanded that it should be laid in the blood of the elder Brother,

## The History of

Brother, and it should lie till it had received kindly the blood, and then to be laid in the Sun and dried, and after that it should be washt with clear Water: his Seruants fulfilled all that he had commanded: and when they began to wash, the blood vanished clean away, when the King saw this, he said to the second Son, it behoveth that thou be letten blood, as thy Brother was. Then said he, My Lords will shall be fulfilled, and anon he was done unto like as his Brother was in all things, and when they began to wash the bone, the blood vanished away. Then said the King to the third Son, it behoveth thee to be letten blood likewise: He answered and said, My Lord it pleaseth me well so to be. When the youngest Brother was letten blood, and done unto in all things as the two Brethren were before, then the Kings Seruants began to wash the bone, but neither for washing nor rubbing might they do away the blood of the bone, but it euer appeared bloody: when the King saw this, he said it appeareth openly now that this blood is of the nature of the bone thou art his true Son, and the other two are Bastards, I judge thee the true for evermore.

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperoz betokeneth our Lord Iesus Christ, which bears a Shield of



## Gesta Romanorum.

of silver with five red Roses, that is his body  
that is so fair, so clear, and more radiant than  
any silver, according to the Psalmist: Speciosus  
forma præ filiis hominum, that is, He was more  
fair than all the Children of men. By the five  
red Roses we understand his five wounds which  
he suffered for mankind. And by the King of  
Egypt we understand the Devil, against whom  
he fought all the time of his life, and at the  
last he was slain for mankind. Nevertheless  
before his death, he made his Testament to his  
three Sons.

By the first, to whom he gave of the Tree all  
that was under the earth, and above the earth,  
we understand such mighty men, and others  
of all Estates in this World, as are not con-  
tent with their callings, seek ambitiously the  
subversion of others, to magnifie and exalt  
themselves. By the second Son, to whom he  
gave all the Tree that was great and small,  
we understand, such worldly wise men, in this  
world, which in their subtilty attempt to win  
or lose all. By the third Son, to whom he gave  
all that was wet and dry of the Tree, we un-  
derstand every good Christian Prince, Noble-  
man, Magistrate, or meaner person in es-  
very Common-wealth wheresoever, which  
(eschewing all ambition and Covetousness)  
holding himself content with the providence  
of God; and in his own calling, laboreth  
truly

## The History of

ruly to do good unto all men; yea, though himself sustain injuries, suffering no solace then care, no riches then poverty; yet receiveth all this thankfully, to have this precious Tree thus bequeathed unto them. This Tree is the Tree of Paradise, that is everlasting joy which is given to us all if we take it thankfully. This every man obtaineth not, therefore it behoveth them to go to the King of Reason, that is, unto the Father of Heaven who knoweth all things. The first Son was let blood, and in his blood the bone was laid. By this bone we shall understand our strong faith in Christs merits, and by the blood the lively and fruitful sap of good works proceeding out of the same, which are rare things to be found in those that seek their own private gain, who when they are let blood by the sharp Lance of Gods Justice, and it be established by Divine Predication, and made dry with the sun of outward profession; yet being washed with the water of swelling Pride, Pallice, Envy, and such like, then the Faith in Christs merits, is as though we had not received it, and the lively fruitful sap of good works hath no power to tarry upon it, but vanisheth away. And thus it fared with these other two, the first and second Sons: but the third Son being contrary unto the other in profession and practice of life and manners, he

## Gesta Romanorum.

be Magistrate or mean person, the bone of such a person will ever be firm of Faith, in himself and towards others. From such a mans bone the blood of lively fruits (to himself and all others profitable) will never be washed away with the water of wretchedness. But the more it is dyed in the Sun of true trial, the better it is: Such are the true Children of God, of whom our Lord speaketh thus: ye which have forsaken all things for me, that is, ye that have forsaken the way of sin, shall receive an hundred times more; that is, ye shall not only receive the Tree of Paradise, but also the Heritage of Heaven. These other two are Bastards, because what they promised in their Baptism, they wrought all the contrary through their wicked living, and therefore he that desireth to obtain the joys of Heaven must abide stedfastly in the profession and practice of good life and manners, and then by Christ he shall obtain the Tree of Paradise: Unto which he bring us, who liveth and reigneth for ever. Amen.

### The Argument.

God so loved sinful man, that he sent his only begotten Son to redeem him out of the captivity of the World, to rest with him in the joys of Heaven.

### The Third History.

**I**n Rome there dwelt sometimes a Noble Emperoz, named Dioclesian, who loved exceedingly

## The History of

cedingly the vertue of Charity, wherefore he desired greatly to know what Fowl loved her young best, to the intent that he might thereby grow to more perfect charity; it fortuned upon a day, that the Emperoz rode to a Forrest to take his disport, whereas he found the nest of a great Bird (called in Latin Struchio Calerni, in English an Ostridge) with her young, the which young Bird the Emperoz took with him, and closed her in a Vessel of Glass, the Dam of this little Bird followed unto the Emperozs Palace, and flew into the Hall where her young one was. But when she saw her young one, and could not come to her, nor get her out, she returned again to the Forrest, and abode there three days, and at the last she came again to the Palace, bearing in her mouth a worm called Thumare, and when she came where her young one was, she let the worm fall upon the Glass, by vertue of which worm the Glass brake, and the young one flew forth with her Dam. When the Emperoz saw this, he praised much the Dam of the Bird, which laboured so diligently to deliver her young one.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz is the Father of Heaven, which greatly loveth them that live in perfect love and charity: This little bird taken from the Forrest, and closed in the

Glass,

## Gesta Romanorum.

Glas, was Adam our forefather, which was exiled out of Paradise and put into the Glas, that is, Hell. This hearing the Dam of the Bird, that is, the Son of God, he descended from Headen, unto the Forrest of the world, and lived there three days, bearing with him a worm, that is, Man-hood, according to the Psalmist, I am a worm and no man. This was slain among the Jews, of whose blood the vessel external was broken, and the Bird went out, that is, Adam went forth with his Dam the Son of God and flew to Heaben.

### The Argument.

A clean Spirit and undefiled Soul is the Daughter of God, so dear unto him that he bestows her not upon the rich man wanting wisdom, but upon the poor man that is wise, and liveth in his fear, which if she have at any time transgress'd by frailty of flesh, then seeketh she for recovery of her health by the medicine of amendment of life: such a soul shall be espoused to Christ, and live with him in the world to come everlastingly.

### The fourth History.

Sometime reigned in Rome a worthy Emperoz and a wise, which had a fair daughter and a gracious in the sight of every man: This Emperoz bethought him one day, to whom he might give his Daughter in Marriage, reasoning thus: If I give my Daughter to a Rich man, and he be a Fool, then is she lost; but if I give her to a poor and a wise

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man,

## The History of

man; then may he get his living by his wisdom.

There was at that time dwelling in the City of Rome, a Philosopher named Socrates, poor but wise, which came to the Emperour and said, My Lord, be not displeased though I put forth my Petition before your Highness: the Emperour said, speak on; then said Socrates, My Lord, ye have a Daughter whom I desire above all things. The Emperour answered and said, My friend, I shall give thee my Daughter to Wife on this condition, that if she die in fellowship after that she is espoused to thee, thou shalt without doubt lose thy head. Then said Socrates, upon this condition I would gladly take her to my Wife. The Emperour hearing this, called all the Lords and States of his Empire and made a great feast at their Wedding. And after the Feast Socrates led home his Wife to his own House, where they lived in peace and health long time. But at the last the Emperours Daughter sickened to death almost. When Socrates perceived this, he said to himself, Alas and woe is me, what shall I do and whether shall I flee, if the Emperours Daughter that is my wife should die? And for sorrow this Socrates went to a Forest there beside, and wept bitterly.

Then while he thus wept and mourn'd, there came an aged man having a staff in his hand



and asked him why he mourned : Socrates answered and said : I espoused the Emperors daughter upon this condition, that if she die in my fellowship, I should lose my life : now she is sickned to death almost, and I can find no remedy nor help, and therefore I mourn.

Then said the old man, be of good comfort for I shall help you if ye will do after my counsel : In this Forest be three Herbs, if you make drinke of the first for your wife, and of the other two a Plaster, and if ye use this medicinal drinke and plaster in due time, without doubt she shall recover her perfect health. Socrates did all that the old man had taught him. And when his wife had used a while that medicinal drinke and plaster, within short time she was perfectly whole of all her sickness. And when the Emperour heard that Socrates had so recovered his wife, he promoted him to great honour.

The Moral.

Dear friends, the Emperour is our Lord Jesus Christ, his Daughter so fair and so gracious is the Soul, made to the similitude of God, which is so glorious in the sight of him and of his Angels, while that she is not defiled, but abideth in her own proper cleanness. This Soul God would not give it to a rich man, but to a poor man, that is, a man that is made of the slime of the earth.

This Socrates is a poor man ; for why, every man cometh poor and naked into this world from

## The History of

his Mothers Belly, and every man takes his soul in weblock upon such condition, that if he die in his fellowship by deadly sin, without doubt he shall lose eternal life. Therefore O thou man, if thy wife sicken through frailty of flesh, unto sin, do then as Socrates did ; go unto the Forest, that is, the Church of Christ, and thou shalt find there an old man with a staff, that is, a discret Preacher, which shall minister unto thee these three herbs, whereof may be confected the Medicine of thy recovery unto health. The first herb is acknowledging of sin ; the second is repentance ; and the third is newness of life, according to the will of God : If these Herbs be used in a plaister, the sinner without doubt shall receive his health, and his soul shall be delivered from sin, and assuredly he shall have everlasting life ; Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ.

### The Argument.

Many foolish Ideots of the World, which flow in abundance of worldly wealth and pomp, thinking they shall live here always, are laboured unto by the preachers of Gods word, and admonished of their momentany felicities, and prepare themselves in bestowing well their short time here, that they may enjoy the blessings of everlasting felicity in the world to come.

### The fifth History.

**S**ometime there reign'd in Rome a mighty Emperoz and a wife, named Frederick, who had one only Son whom he loved much.  
This



This Emperoz when he lay at point of death called unto him his Son, and said, Dear Son, I have a Ball of Gold, which I charge thee on my blessing, that thou anon after my death shalt give to the veriest Fool thou canst find, Then said his Son : My Lord, without doubt your will shall be fulfilled : Anon this young Lord after the death of his Father, went and sought many Realms, and found many wretches fols, but because he would perform his Fathers will, he sought till he came to a Realm where the Law was such, as every year a new King was chosen, who had the ruling of the Realm for one year only, and at the years end he was deposed and exiled into an Island where he finished his life in misery. When the Emperors Son came to this Realm, the new King was chosen with great honour, and brought unto his Regal seat with much music and great reverence. And when the Emperoz saw that, he came unto him and saluted him reverently, saying : My Lord, lo I give you this Ball of Gold, on my Fathers behalf. Then said he : I pray thee tell me the cause why thou givest me this Ball : Then answered he, and said, My Father charged me on his death bed, that I should give this Ball to the most fool I could find : wherefore I have sought many Realms, and have found many fols, but a more fool than thou

## The History of

I never found : for it is unknown to thee that thou shalt reign but a year, and at the years end thou shalt be exiled into such a place, where as thou shalt die a miserable death : wherefore I hold thee most fool as ever I found, for as much as for the Lordship of a year thou wilt so wilfully lose thy self, and therefore I give thee this Ball. Then said the King, Without doubt thou saist truly, and therefore while I am now in full power of this Realm, I will send before me great treasure, wherewith I may sustain my self from miserable death, when I shall be exiled and put down. And so this was done : and at the years end when he was exiled he lived there in peace and quietness, and afterwards died a good death.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour is the Father of Heaven, the which bequeatheth the Ball, that is, worldly riches to Fools and Idots, who savour nothing but what is earthly. This Emperours Son, is a Preacher or discret Minister that travelleth about many Realms and Lands, to shew unbelieving men and fools their peril. The Realm wherein no King might reign but a year, is the world: For whoso liveth an hundred years, when he dieth he shall seem to have lived but the space of a year : there

therefore do as the King did while you be in power of life, send before you your treasure, that is, firm Faith in Christs merits, and the fruits of Gods Word, proceeding from the same; then certainly when we be exiled out of this World we shall live in peace, and shall find the mercy of God plentifully, whereby we shall obtain eternal life. Unto which brings us, he that for us shed his precious blood.

### The Argument.

The evil disposed men of this World are here advertised of their greedy griping after the sweet temptations of the Devil, wherein such do rejoyce till death cometh suddenly upon them, and then they fall into the horrible pit of desolate darkness, due to their desert.

### The sixth History.

**D**iolesian reigned in the City of Rome, in whose Empire dwelt a noble Philosopher, who by his Art set up an Image in the midst of the City of Rome, which Image stretched out his Arm, and his foremost finger, whereupon stood this Verse written in Latin: Percute hic, Strike here. This Image after the death of the Philosopher stood a long time, and many great Clerks came for to read the Superscription that was on the finger, but none understood it: wherefore the people wondered much. At last a long time after, there came

## The History of

a strange Clerk out of a far Countrey, and when he saw the Image, he read the Superscription, Strike here. And then upon a day when he saw the shadow of the hand, he took a Mattock, and broke up the ground under the hand where the shadow was, according to the understanding of the Superscription, and anon he found an house all of Marble underneath the ground, wherein he found so much Riches, so many Jewels, and so great marvels as he never saw befoze. And at last he saw a table ready covered, and all manner of things necessary thereto, set thereupon. He farther beheld and saw a Carbuncle in the Hall that lighted all the House. And against this Carbuncle on the other side, stood a man holding a Bow in his hand, and an Arrow ready to shoot. The Clerk marvelled much when he saw all these things, and thought with himself, that if I tell this forth, there will no man believe me, and therefore I will have somewhat of these goods in token thereof. And with that he saw a Knife of Gold upon the Table, the which he took, and would have put it in his bosom, but then the Archer smote the Carbuncle and brake it, whereby the whole house was shadowed and made dark, which when the Clerk perceived wept most bitterly, for he knew no way to get out, for as much as the house was made dark through the breaking of  
the

## Gesta Romanorum

the Carbuncle. And the darkness abode there for ever after. And so finished the Clerk his life there in that darkness.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Image thus standing betokens the Devil, which saith evermore, Strike here, that is, seek after worldly riches and not for heavenly treasure. This Clerk that digged with the Mattock, doth betoken the worldly wise men of this World, as evil disposed pleaders of the Law, crafty Attorneys, and other wicked Worldlings that be ever smiting what by right, and what by wrong, so that they may get the vanities of the world, and in their smiting they find great wonders, that is, they find therein the delights of the World, wherein many men rejoice. The Carbuncle that giveth light is the youth of man, which giveth hardiness to take their pleasure in worldly riches. The Archer with his Arrow is Death, which lays watch against man to slay him. The Clerk that took up the Knife, betokeneth every worldly man; that coveteth ever to have all things to his will. Till death smiteth the Carbuncle, that is, the youth, strength and power of man, and then lyeth he wrapped in the darkness of sin, in which darkness oftentimes he dyeth.

There.

## The History of

Therefore study we to fly the world, and her  
vain delights, and then we shall be sure to win e-  
verlasting life, unto which Christ Jesus bring  
us, Amen.

## The Argument.

We are here generally put in mind, that the Devil be-  
sieging the World, our Champion Christ Jesus be  
ready to take our quarrel into his own hand, whose  
descending and saving us from the invasion and cir-  
cumvention of Satan, is yet accursed for us as a trans-  
gressor, and is content to suffer death for our full Justifi-  
cation.

## The Seventh History.

**I**N Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Empe-  
roz named Titus, who ordained in his days  
such a Law, that what Knight died in the Em-  
pire should be buried in his armour, and who-  
soever presum'd to spoil any Knight of his Ar-  
mour after he was dead, should die without a-  
ny gain saying. It befel after few years that a  
City of the Empire was in danger of losing,  
for none that were in the City could defend  
themselves by any manner of policy, where-  
fore great sorrow and lamentation was made  
throughout the City.

But at last within few days there came to  
the City a young Knight well-favoured, and  
valiant in feats of Arms, whom the worthy  
men of the City beholding, and understanding  
his promises, cryed to him with one voice :



## Gesta Romanorum.

O thou most noble Knight, we beseech thee to help us now at our most need, for you may see this City is like to be lost: Then he answered and said: Sirs, ye see I have no Armour, but if I had, I would defend your City.

This hearing a mighty man of that City, he said to him secretly: Sir, here lived sometime a valiant Knight, who now is dead and buried within the City, and if it please you to take his Armour ye may defend this City, and deliver us from peril, and that will be honour unto you, and profit unto the City.

The young Knight hearing this, went to the Grave, and arrayed himself with the Armour, and after much fight obtained the victory, and delivered the City. Which done, he laid the Armour again in the Grave. But there were some men of the City who envied him because he had obtained the victory, and accused him to the Judge, saying thus, Sir, a Law was made by the Emperour, that whosoever despoiled any dead Knight of his Armour, should die. This young Knight found a dead Knight, and took away his Armour, therefore I beseech thee that thou proceed in Law against him with equity and justice, in giving him severe punishment for so offending the Law. When the Judge heard this, he made the Knight to be taken, and when he was examined of this his trespass against the Law, he said thus:  
Sir,

## The History of

Sir, it is written in the Law, that of two harms the least is to be chosen. It is not unknown to you that this City was in peril to be lost, and had I not taken this Armour, I had neither saved you nor the City, therefore methinks you ought rather to honour me for this good deed that I have done, than thus shamefully to reprove me: for I am led as he that is ready to be hanged. Also good Sirs, another thing I may alledge for my excuse: he that stealeth or robbeth violently, purposeth not to restore the thing which he stealeth: but it is not thus with me; for though I took the Armour of the dead Knight for your defence and safeguard, when I had obtained the victory, I bare it again to the same place, and to the dead Knight whose it is by the Law. Then said the Justice, a Thief that breaketh a house that he may steal and bear away such as he can find, although he bring again that he hath taken, I ask of thee if that the breaking of the House be lawful or not. The Knight answered, sometimes the breaking of the House may be good, whereas it is made in a feeble place, which would cause the Master of the House to make his wall stronger, that the Thieves after break not by force the walls so lightly, for avoiding of more harm.

Then



## Gesta Romanorum.

Then said the Judge, if the breaking of the House be good, nevertheless in that breaking, violence is done to the Lord of the house: And so though thou didst restore the Armour of the dead Knight, nevertheless, thou didst wrong to the dead Knight in taking away his Armour. The Knight said, I have told you, that of two harms the least is to be chosen, and that harm where through great goodness cometh, ought not to be called harm, it should rather be called good. For if a House within the City were on fire and began to burn, it were better that three or four Houses thereby should be thrown to the ground, than that they should be set on fire also, whereby all the City would be burned; right so, if the Armour of the dead Knight had not been taken the City had been lost. and when the Judge heard that he answered so well and so reasonably, he could give no judgment against him. But they who had accused this Knight, slew him: for whose death there was great weeping throughout all the City, and his body was honourably buried in a new Tomb.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour is the Father of heaven and this City is the world, which is be-

## The History of

besieged of the Devil and deadly sin; and as many as were within the City, were all in peril to be lost. This young Knight that came to the City is our Lord Jesus Christ, who had not the Armour of humanity, till he went to the grave, that is, the womb of the glorious Virgin Mary, by the annunciation of the Angel, saying, The Holy Ghost shall light on thee, and so thou shalt conceive and bear a Son. And thus in the womb of the Virgin he took the Armour of the dead Knight, that is, the manhood of Adam our forefather, and saved the City that is, the world and mankind, by his blessed passion that he suffered on the Cross, and he put the Armour again into the grave, when his blessed body was buried; but the Citizens envied him, that is, the Jews accused him to Pilate, saying, If thou suffer him thus, thou art not Cæsars friend: we have a Law, and after the Law he ought to die, Joh. 19. 21. And thus our Lord Jesus Christ of his Enemies was condemned to the death of the Cross, and after ascended up to heaven, whither he will bring us. Amen.

## The Argument.

The fornication of the wicked worldly men is here detected by the providence of God, and by his gracious favour, the sinner is delivered out of thralldom of sin, unto the liberty of life everlasting.

The

Gesta Romanorum.

The eighth History.

**T**here reign'd, sometime in Rome a mighty Emperor and a wife, named Berold, who ordained a Law, that what woman was taken in adultery, her husband being alive she should be cast into perpetual prison. There was at that time a Knight that had a fair Lady to his wife, who committed Adultery, her husband being alive, and was with Child, therefore by the Law she was put in prison, where in short time she was delivered of a fair Son. The child grew up till it was seven years old, and his Mother daily wept bitterly: which when the child heard, he said unto her, O Mother why weep ye thus: and for what cause are you thus perplexed? Then said his Mother, O my sweet Son, I have great cause to mourn, and thou also, for above our heads are people walking and the Sun shineth in clearness, and we be here continually in such darkness, that I can neither see thee nor thou me: alas that ever I conceived thee! Then said the Son such joy as you speak of, I never saw, for I was born here in this darkness, therefore if I had meat and drink enough I should live here all my life. Therefore Mother weep not but be chearful. This lamentation that was between the Mother and the Son the Emperors Steward heard, that stood above their heads, whereof he had great compassion, and went to

### The History of

to the Emperoz, and kneeling besought him of his Grace, that the Mother and the Son might be delivered out of prison. The Emperoz as a merciful Lord, granted that they should be delivered. Nevertheless, if they trespassed so in time to come, they should be punished with double pain. And after she was delivered she lived joyfully.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz is Father of Heaven that made the Law, that what married woman, that is, what soul that is espoused to the Lord, and doth commit adultery, that is, doth worship strange Gods, should be cast into the Prison of Hell; therefore the sinful soul hath great cause to weep, for she is debarred from light, that is, from the joys of Heaven. Her Son that desired meat and drink, are the wealthy wicked Worldlings, that say to the Preachers that preach unto them the joys of Heaven, that while we may live and have all the solace of the World, we desire no other Heaven. The Steward that heard their Lamentation, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who knowing all the privities of our sorrowful and repentant hearts for our sins, besought the Father of Heaven for us, that we might be delivered from the prison of sin, and so come to everlasting Life. Unto which he bring us all, Amen.

The

## Gesta Romanorum.

### The Argument.

Christ proclaimeth the joyful Feast of Heaven, whereto the Lamie, that is, the poor preachers of the Gospel, having their sight of knowledge in Gods word, supported by the blind Laity, and each mutually comforting others, they approach unto the proclaimed Feast or perpetual felicity.

### The Ninth History.

Sometime in Rome dwelt an Emperoz named Pompey, who above all other things was merciful. This Emperoz proclaimed throughout all his Empire a great Feast, and that poor and rich should come to the Feast, and whosoever came to that Feast should not only be well fed, but also should have great gifts.

When the Herald had warned all manner of men to come to this Feast; at that time there were two poor men lying by the way, the one being lame, and the other blind. Alas, said one of these men to the other, woe to us both, how shall we do? for the Emperoz hath proclaimed a Feast, and whosoever cometh thither, shall not only be well fed, but also shall have great gifts, and I am blind, and thou art lame, how shall we do? Then said the lame man to the blind man, I shall give thee good counsel, if thou wilt do after me; I am lame and feeble, and may not go, nevertheless I can see, and thou art blind, but strong; take thou me upon thy back, and bear me, and I shall direct the right way, and thus

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we

## The History of

we shall both come to the Emperors Feast. Then said the blind man, let it be so, get thou on my back, and I shall hear thee, and guide thou me, and so they did, and came both to the feast, and received great rewards, and after ended their lives in peace.

### The Moral

Dear friends, this Emperour is our Saviour Iesus Christ, that proclaimeth a Feast, that is, the joys of Heaven, unto the which joys he calleth all mankind, and forsaketh no man that will come unto him. This lame man betokeneth the poor Ministers of the Gospel, which wanting worldly wealth, live by the Providence of God; and this blind man betokeneth the Layman, who knows not the right way to Heaven. It behoveth the blind man, that is, the Laymen, to hear the lame man, that is, the Ministers of the Gospel, sustaining and feeding them with the duties of the Church: and the Ministers of Gods cause are bound to teach and to inform us in the way to Heaven, whereas we shall not only have a Feast, but also great reward and joy. Unto which God bring us all. Amen.

### The Argument.

Heaven and Hell are here compared to two Cities, these Cities are two contrary ways: to Heaven (which is the City of all Heavenly treasure and felicity) is a narrow, crooked, craggy, and painful way, having three Enemies, the Devil, the World and the Flesh.

To



## Gesta Romanorum.

To Hell (being the City or sink of sorrow and sadness,) a fair way, broad, plain, and easie, having three guides; that is, Pride of life, Covetousness of the eyes, and Concupiscence of the Flesh.

### The Tenth History.

**S**ometime in Rome dwelt an Emperoz named Folliculus, who was very wise and merciful in all his works. This Emperoz builded in the East a noble City, wherein he put all his Treasure to be kept. Unto this City the way was stony, full of Brambles and sharp Thorns; and three Knights were armed ready to fight with them that would come to that City. Therefore the Emperoz ordained that whosoever overcame these Knights, should enter the City, and take at his will of the Emperors Treasure. After that this Emperoz did make in the North a City, wherein he ordained all manner of pain, sorrow, and tormenting for Malefactors, to which was a broad way very delectable, growing full of Roses and fair Lillies, and in their way were three Knights ever waiting, if any man came towards the City of the North, to serve him with all manner of delicates and necessary provision: And if it fortuneth that any man did enter within that City, the custom was such, that the people would bind him Hand and Foot, and cast him into Prison, there to abide the sentence of the Judge.

## The History of

When this was cryed throughout all the Empire, there were two Knights dwelling in one City, one named Jonatas, who was a wise man, the other called Pirrhus, who was a Fool, nevertheless there had continued between them great love. This Jonatas said to Pirrhus: Dear friend, there is a common cry made throughout all the Land, that the Emperour hath made a City in the East, wherein he hath put his treasure, and whosoever may enter that City, shall take what he will of the Treasure; therefore let us go thither.

Then said Pirrhus: Thy counsel is good, let us go. The wise Knight said, if it be so that thou wilt follow my counsel, I pray thee that faithful friendship may continue between us, and in token of love thou shalt drink my blood, and I will drink thine, on this condition, that neither of us leave other in this journey. The foolish Knight said, it pleaseth me right well, therefore they were both let blood, and each of them drank others blood. When this was done, they went forth together on their journey, and when they had gone three days journey toward the City where the Treasures were, they came to a place where were two ways, one sharp, and stony and full of Thorns, the other fair and plain, and full of Delights. Then said the wise Knight to his fellow: Dear friend,

here



here are two ways, one sharp and thorny ;  
 nevertheless, if we go this way, we shall come  
 to a City that is so rich, and there we shall  
 have that we desire. Then said the foolish  
 Knight to his fellow, I wonder greatly at  
 you, that you will speak such things, for  
 I will rather believe mine eyes than your  
 words. I see here openly, and so do you, that  
 here is a hard way, and full of thorns ; and  
 as I have heard, there be three Champions  
 armed in this way ready to fight against all  
 men that go towards the City of the East, and  
 therefore I will not go that way, but here is  
 (as you may see) another way plain and easie  
 to walk in, and in this way are three Knights  
 ready to serve us, and give all manner of  
 things delightful for us : and therefore by  
 this way I will go, and not by that other  
 way. Then said the wise Knight, certainly  
 if we go by that way, we shall be led into  
 the City of the North, wherein there is no  
 mercy, but perpetual pain and sorrow, and  
 there we shall be taken and bound, and cast  
 into Prison. Certainly said the foolish Knight  
 this way is the ready way, and as I believe  
 it is more profitable than the other way. Then  
 went they both forth the fair way, and anon  
 three Knights met with them, which receiv-  
 ed them courteously for one night, and gave  
 them all manner of things that were pleasant

## The History of

to them. And on the morrow, they took their journey forth toward the City, and when they were within the City, anon the Emperors Officers met with them, and said, Friends, why came ye hither? insomuch that ye knew the Law of this City is so cruel of long time heretofore, surely ye shall be serbed now after the Law. Anon they took the wise Knight, and brought him, and cast him into Prison, and after that they took the foolish Knight, and bound him fast, and cast him into a Ditch. Soon after it befel, that the Judge came to the City to give judgment on them that had trespassed the Law, and anon all the Prisoners were brought forth before the Judge, among whom these two Knights were brought forth, one from Prison, and the other from the Ditch. Then said the wise Knight to the Judge: My reverend Lord, I complain of my fellow that he is guilty of my death: for when we two came to the two ways, whereof the one led to the City of the East, and the other to this City, I told him all the peril of this City, and the reward of that other City, but he would not believe me, but said to me in this wise, I will believe mine own eyes better than thy words, and because he was my fellow, I would not let him go alone in this way: and thus came I with him, wherefore he is the cause of my death. Then said the foolish Knight, I complain that

that he is the cause of my death : for it is not unknown to you all, that I am a fool and he a wise man, and therefore he should not so lightly have followed my folly, for if he had forsaken this way, I should have followed him, and therefore he is the cause of my death. Then said the Judge to the wise Knight, because that thou with all thy wisdom, so lightly consentedst and followedst the will of the fool, and his foolish works : and thou fool, because thou didst reject the good counsel and advice of the wise, and wouldst not believe him, I give Judgment, that ye both be hanged for your trespass : and so it was done. Wherefore all men praised greatly the Judge for his discreet Judgment.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour is Almighty God, and in the East is the City of Heaven wherein is treasure infinite : And unto this City is a hard way and full of Thorns, that is the way of Repentance, by which way full few walk : for it is hard and straight according to the holy Scripture, saying thus, *Arcta est via quæ ducit ad vitam*, It is a straight way that leadeth to everlasting life. In this way are three armed Knights, that is, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh : with whom it behoveth us to fight, and to

## The History of

obtain the victory before we may come to Hea-  
ven. The second City that is in the North  
is Hell: and to this accordeth the Scripture,  
saying thus, Ab aquilone ponetur omne ma-  
lum, Out of the North cometh all evil. Cer-  
tainly to this City the way is plain and broad,  
and walled about on every side with all manner  
of delights, wherefore many men walk by  
this way. The three Knights that give to  
every man going this way, what thing they  
please, are these, Pride of life, Covetousness  
of the eyes, and concupiscence of the flesh: in  
which three the wretched man greatly delight-  
eth, and at the last they lead him to Hell.  
This witty Knight betokeneth the soul, and  
the foolish Knight betokeneth the flesh, which  
is always foolish, and at all times ready to  
do evil. These two are fellows and knit in  
one: for either of them drink others blood;  
that is, they shall drink of one Cup either of  
joy or pain, which they shall have after the day  
of Doom.

The Soul chuseth the way of repentance,  
and in as much as she may, she stirreth the  
Flesh to do the same. But the Flesh never  
thinketh what shall come after, and therefore  
she goeth in the delights of this World, and  
flyeth the vertue of Repentance. And thus  
the Soul after death is cast into Hell, and the  
Flesh is cast into the Ditch, that is, into the  
Grave.

## Gesta Romanorum.

**Gzabe.** But when the Judge cometh, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, at the last day to judge all mankind: Then the Soul shall complain upon the Flesh, and the Flesh upon the Soul: But then the Judge, that cannot be deceived, shall condemn the Soul, because she followed the frailty of the Flesh, and the Flesh because it would not believe the Soul. Wherefore let us study to tame our Flesh that we may obey God, and then we shall have eternal life. Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The Argument.

The Soul of man being possesst of the Princely Territory of Paradice, was by the Devil provoked to sin against his Creator, and for the same transgression (being thence into the world exiled) lost that heritage: but by Christs blessed Death and Passion was restored to a more happy Heritage of everlasting Felicity.

### The Eleventh History.

**T**Here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperoz named Frederick, which had no Child but one only Daughter, to whom this Emperoz after his decease bequeathed all his Empire. This understanding an Earl that dwelt there beside, he came to this young Lady, and loved her, and provoked her to sin all that he might; whereby this young Lady in short process of time inclined to the Earl, and this Earl anon lay with her, and defiled her:

## The History of

her: and after that he drave her from her Heritage, and exiled her out of the Empire, wherefoze she made great lamentation, and fled unto a Realm there beside, where she daily wept and mourned.

It befel after one day, that while she sate mourning by the high-way side, there came riding by her a fair young Knight upon a Horse, who came towards her a great pace, and very courteously saluted her, asking her the cause why she mourned so sore. Then answered she, and said, My Reverend Lord, I am an Emperors Daughter, descended of the Royal blood, my Father is dead, who left me all his Empire, because he had no other Heir. And after his decease an Earl there-beside deceived me, deflowred my Virginitie, and after that, he put me violently out of my Heritage, so that now I am faine to beg my bread from door to door, and this is the cause of my sorrow. Then said the Knight: Fair Damsel, I have great compassion on thy beauty and on thy comeliness: therefore if thou wilt grant me one thing I will fight for thee against the Earl, and I will assure thee the victorie: Then said she alas, good sir, I have nothing that I may give unto you but my self: And I ask no more of thee, said the Knight, but that thou wouldst be my Wife, and love no man so much as me. Then  
said



# Gesta Romanorum.

said she : Reverend Sir, that I will do gladly, and more if I might. Then said the Knight : I will that thou do nothing for me, but if it fortune me to die in the fight for thee, and obtain the victory, thou shalt take my bloody Shirt, and hang it upon a beam in thy Chamber : and this shalt thou do for two causes : The first is, that whensoever thou beholdest the Shirt, thou shalt weep for me. The second is, that whatsoever man cometh to wooe thee to be his Wife, thou shalt then hastily run unto thy Chamber, and there beholding my bloody Shirt, think heartily within thy self thus.

The Lord of this Shirt died for my love in battel, by which he recovered my Heritage. God forbid I should take any other man after his death. Then said she, Reverend Sir, all this I shall fulfil by the grace of God. And when the Knight heard this, he assayed to fight against the said Earl, and obtained the Victory, and the Earl was overcome and fled, and this young Lady was brought and received again into her Heritage. Nevertheless, the Knight was deadly wounded in the Battel, whereof he died : but ere he died he bequeathed his bloody Shirt unto this Damsel, desiring her to keep her promise. When this young Lady heard of his death, she wept sore, for in his Shirt was wrought thus,  
Think

## The History of

Think on me and have in mind  
Him that to thee was so kind.

Anon when she had received this Shirt, she hanged it upon a beam in her Chamber, and as oft as she beheld it she wept bitterly. It befel not long after, that the States of the Empire came to her, and desired her to take an Husband; but then she went to her Chamber, and beheld the bloody Shirt, and waxed sorrowful, and said oftentimes, woe and alas thou sufferest death for my love, and thou also recoveredst again my Heritage: God forbid that I should take any other man but thee. And thus she answered every man that came to her: and so they went away disappointed of their purpose, and she ended her life in rest.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz is the Father of Heaven, and his Daughter is the Soul of man, made to the similitude of God: to whom he gave and bequeathed the Empire of Paradise. But there came the Earl, that is, the Devil, and provoked her to sin, when she eat of the Apple, and said to her thus: In what hour ye eat of this Apple ye shall be Gods. Wherefore we breaking Gods commandment were exiled out of Paradise, to live in this World in great wretchedness,

## Gesta Romanorum.

as the Scripture saith : In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy Bread. But then came a fair young Knight and a strong, that is our Lord Jesus Christ, who had compassion upon mankind, and taking upon him our flesh and blood, gave battel to the Devil and overcame him ; and thus won he again our Heritage. Therefore let us do as this young Lady did, let us lay this bloody Shirt, that is the remembrance of the Passover of Christ on the beam of our hearts, let us think our Lord Jesus shed his precious blood for us. And if any man, that is, of the Devil, or any other would stir us to sin, let us think presently on the passion of Christ saying thus ; I will take none other but thee, who hast shed thy blood for me, and thus shall we win everlasting life. Unto which God bring us all, Amen.

### The Argument.

We are here generally advertised of honouring the Sabbath day : how for the redeeming of time, to be occupied in Ghostly Contemplation, is profitable to the Soul and Body. Also Preachers of Gods Word oftentimes for saying truth purchase ill will. If we bestow our talents in the amplifying of our Faith, and furthering one of another with good works, we shall in time inherit the fruition of eternal life, prepared for Christ's Elect.

### The Twelfth History.

**I**n Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperor named Apolonius, who ordained a Law,

The History of

Law; that every man upon pain of death should celebrate the day of his Nativity. This Emperour called to them a Clerk that was hight Virgil, and said, My dear Master, there be many hainous offences done in my Empire contrary to the Law, therefore I pray thee, that thou by thy cunning wouldest make some craft whereby I may know who trespasseth against the Law privately or openly. Then said Virgil, My reverend Lord, your will shall be done: anon this Virgil through his craft made an Image in the midst of the City of Rome, which denounced and told all the Emperours Messengers who trespassed against the Law, and who not. There was at that time dwelling in the City of Rome a Smith that hight Focus, which by no means would celebrate the Nativity of the Emperour. It befel upon a night as the Smith lay in his bed, he thought upon the Image that accused many men before, dreading lest the Image would accuse him; wherefore he arose, and went to the Image, and said, I make a Vow to God, if thou accuse me I shall break thy head, and when he had said thus, he went home. The Emperour on the morrow following sent Messengers to the Image, (as before time he was accustomed) to know and understand who had trespassed against the Law. And to them then said the Image, lift up your eyes and behold

## Gesta Romanorum.

behold what is ingraven in the forehead. And when they looked up, they saw this Poſſie written. Times be changed, and men become worſe and worſe; for he that will ſay the Truth ſhall have his head broken. Therefore go ye forth to your Lord, and tell him all that ye have heard and ſeen. The Meſſengers went forth and told the Emperour all they had heard and ſeen.

Then ſaid the Emperour, arm your ſelves and go to the Image, and if that you find any man that hath menaced or threated to hurt the Image, bind him hand and foot, and bring him unto me. Then went the Meſſengers forth to the Image, and ſaid to it: tell us the truth, if any man have threated thee, and we ſhall revenge thee anon. Then ſaid the Image, take the Smith Focus, for he is the man that will not honour the Pativty of the Emperour: Straightway the Meſſengers led forth the Smith beſore the Emperour, and there examined him why he kept not the day of the Emperours Pativty in Reverence and Honour, according to the Law: Then answered the Smith, and ſaid, Reverend Lord, I beſeech you that you will hear mine excuſe, and if I answer not reaſonably to all manner of points that ye ſhall ask me, I will yield me fully to your Grace: then ſaid the Emperour I will hear thee, and that which is right, that I will do.

Then

## The History of

Then said the Smith, I must have eight pence every day in the Week, and them I cannot get without great labour, and therefore I may not keep that day holy day more than other days. Then said the Emperoz, why must thou have this eight pence? Then said the Smith, I am bound to pay daily two pence, and two pence I lend, and two pence I lose, and two pence I spend: Then said the Emperoz, tell me more expressly of these eight pence: Then said the Smith, I am bound every day to pay two pence to my Father; for when I was young he spent daily two pence on me, which I am bound to pay him again for his sustentation: and two pence I lose on my wife. Then said the Emperoz, why lovest thou that two pence on thy Wife? Then said he, where saw ye ever a woman but she had one of these properties, either she was wilful and contrary to her Husband, or hot of complexion: and therefore that I give her I lose, and two pence I lend to my Son, wherewith he is sustained, that when I come to age and poverty he may pay me two pence again, like as I do my Father. And I spend two pence on my self in meat and drink and that is little enough. Then said the Emperoz thou hast answered well and wisely. Not long after the Emperoz died, and this Smith Focus was chosen to be Emperoz, because



cause he spent his eight pence so wisely and so profitably; and thus he ended his life in peace and rest.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperoz is our blessed Saviour Iesus Christ, which ordained by his holy Law, that every one should keep holy the Sabbath-day. This Virgil that made that Image is the Holy Ghost who establisht among us Preachers, to teach vertues and reprove vices, and they should not spare the Poor nor the Rich. But now if a Preacher should speak the truth against any man, he shall be threatned by the Enemies of Christ, that is, by evil men that neither love God nor man. Wherefore the Preacher may say now a-days, that Posie which was written in the fore-head of the Image: Times be changed from good to ill, and men be daily worse; for whoso could speak the Truth now a-days shall have his head broken. Therefore it is needful they be armed, that is, ought to be armed with vertuous examples of good life, and then they need not fear, because they have the truth of God to stand by them, according to the Apostles saying: If God be for us, who can be against us?

By this Smith Focus, is understood every good Christian-man, who daily should spend his time in redëming every hours travel  
D
with

## The History of

with some profit Corporal or Spiritual : and then ought he to be presented before the Emperour : This Focus paid two pence to the Father, and so we should pay to our Father of Heaven two pence, that is, honour and love ; for when we were Children of wretchedness, and in bondage, Almighty God sent down to the earth his Son to redeem us, according to St. John the Evangelist, saying, God loved the World so well, that he gave his only begotten Son for the Salvation of the World. Also this Focus lent two pence to his Son : that is, every Christian man ought to lend to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, true and unfeigned faith, and fruitful good Works and Deeds in our life, and he will repay us again at the day of doom with his heavenly mercy, when Soul and Body shall be glorified, and that he is our brother may be proved by the Text of Isaiah, saying, A Child is born to us. This Focus lost two pence to his Wife : his Wife betokens the flesh, upon whom thou lovest two pence, that is, unlawful love and consent to sin, because the flesh is contrary to the spirit, and is ever subject to sin. This Focus also spent two pence on himself : by the first penny, ye shall understand repentance, whereat the Angels in Heaven do greatly rejoyce : by the second penny ye shall understand

stand perfect perseverance in amendment of life,  
for he that abideth to the end shall be saved,  
And he that spendeth well these two pence shall  
obtain everlasting life ; unto which bring us our  
Lord Iesus Christ. Amen.

The Argument.

Man being blind through sin, and either by infirmity of  
frail flesh, or suggestion trespassing with evil and lewd  
company, though God of his mercy be favourable unto  
him in his life time by reason of the aforesaid respect,  
yet if he accustomedly walk on forward in this world-  
ly wickedness, his wilful blindness shall not excuse him,  
but accuse him in the day of Judgment most grievously  
to have offended God, in abusing his mercy offered,  
and therefore the less worthy to have the reward of  
the simple Soul, that repentantly and with modesty  
liveth to the fruition of everlasting bliss.

The Thirteenth History.

Sometime in Rome dwelt a noble Empe-  
roꝝ which among all other vertues loved  
best mercy : Wherefoꝛe he ordained a Law,  
that every blind man should have an hundred  
Shillings by the year of his Treasure. It befel  
on a day, that certain men came to a Tabern  
to drink Wine, and that these men had sitten  
in the Tabern thre days, the fourth day  
they were greatly in debt foꝛ the Wine : where-  
foꝛe the Winter came to them and demanded  
Money foꝛ his Wine. Then said one of the  
Drinkers, Sirs, the Emperoz hath made such

## The History of

a Law, that every blind man shall have an hundred Shillings of his Treasure : therefore let us cast Lots among us, and to whom the lot falleth, let his Eyes be put out, and so he may go to the Emperors Palace, and get an hundred Shillings to discharge us. Now this counsel liked them well ; so they cast Lots, and the Lot fell on him that gave the counsel, and his Fellows immediately put out his Eyes.

And when he was blind, he went to the Emperors Palace, and asked an hundred Shillings of the Steward, according to the Emperors Decree. Dear Friend said the Steward, thou didst see with both thine eyes a while since, thou also understandest the Law amiss : for the Law is made for men that are blind through infirmities, or by the will of God, but the other day thou hadst thy sight in the Tabern, and hast wilfully lost it. Therefore go to the Tabern again to thy fellows, and discharge what thou owest, for here gettest thou not a Farthing. Then went this wretched man forth, and told his fellows of the Stewards answer, and with that came in the Winter, and despoiled them of all their Cloaths, and beat them, and thus drove them with shame out of the City : And so were they never after seen there.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz is our Saviour Christ, who ordained a Law, that every blind man should have an hundred Shillings of his Treasure. The blind man betokeneth every sinner, who sinneth through infirmity, or the inticing of the Devil, the World and the Flesh, and shall receive an hundred Shillings, if he be inwardly repentant of his sins: that is, he shall have an hundred times more joy, according to the Scripture, saying, Ye shall receive an hundred times more joy if ye repent and turn from sin, and ye shall have everlasting life. These men that came to the Tabern to drink Wine, be sinners, who oftentimes come to the Tabern of our Adversary the Devil, to drink of his carnal Appetites; that is, they have consumed and wasted away all Spiritual Vertues, which they received at the Sacrament of Baptism, where the Devil our enemy despoileth them of all their good deeds that ever they have wrought before. They cast lots; that is, they cast among them the custom of sin, and this lot of sin falleth on such as are unthankful and merciless: and such a man wilfully becomes wilful, a foul sinner like Judas, that betrayed our Lord without any suggestion or inticing: Therefore such men sin most grievously. When they come before the Steward

## The History of

that is, before the Prelates of the Church, they can hardly obtain an assurance of Heaven, because they be not in the right way to leave their sin. Therefore let us study with all diligence to please God, that we may obtain everlasting life, which is laid up in store for all those that live modestly, looking for eternal Salvation. Unto which bring us Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The Argument.

A certain faithful vow of love being made between the Soul of every faithful Christian and Jesus Christ, we are to consider the merciful and gracious Covenant of God toward the faithful, and to be careful of this Covenant, and we are to study to perform our Vows, so as we at the prefixed day of Promise being undefiled, may thereby purchase the promised place of everlasting glory, prepared for all them that seek the glory of God, and their souls health.

### The Fourteenth History.

**I**N Rome sometime dwelt a mighty Emperour named Philominus, who had one only Daughter, who was fair and gracious in the sight of every man, who had to name Aglaes. There was also in the Emperours Palace a gentle Knight that loved dearly this Lady. It befel after on a day, that this Knight talked with this Lady, and secretly uttered his desire to her. Then she said courteously seeing you have uttered to me the secrets of your heart, I will likewise for your love utter to you the secrets of my heart, and truly I say, that



that aboue all other I love you best. Then  
 said the Knight, I purpose to visit the Holy  
 Land, and therefore give me your Troth,  
 that this seven years you shall take no other  
 Man, but only for my love to tarry for me  
 so long, and if I come not again by this  
 day seven years, then take what man you  
 like best. And likewise I promise you that  
 within this seven years I will take no  
 Wife. Then said she, this Covenant plea-  
 seth me well. When this was said, each  
 of them was betrothed to other, and then  
 this Knight took his leave of the Lady and  
 went to the Holy Land. Shortly after the  
 Emperoz treated with the King of Hungaria  
 for the marriage of his Daughter. Then  
 came the King of Hungary to the Emperors Pa-  
 lace to see his Daughter, and when he had seen  
 her, he liked marvellous well her beauty  
 and her behaviour, so that the Emperoz and  
 the King were accorded in all things as  
 touching the marriage, upon the condition  
 that the Damsel would consent. Then cal-  
 led the Emperoz the young Lady to him,  
 and said, O my fair Daughter, I have pro-  
 vided for thee, that a King shall be thy Hus-  
 band, if thou list consent, therefore tell me  
 what answer thou wilt give to this. Then  
 said she to her Father, it pleaseth me well;  
 but one thing dear Father I intreat of you,

## The History of

if it might please you to grant me : I have vowed to keep my Virginitie, and not to marry this seven years ; therefore dear Father, I beseech you for all the love that is between your gracious Fatherhood and me, that you name no man to be my Husband till these seven years be ended, and then I shall be ready in all things to fulfil your will. When said the Emperoz, sith it is so that thou hast thus vowed, I will not break thy Vow, but when these seven years be expired, thou shalt have the King of Hungary to thy Husband.

Then the Emperoz sent forth his Letters to the King of Hungary, praying him if it might please him to stay seven years for the love of his Daughter, and then he should speed without fail. Herewith the King was pleased and content to stay the prefixed day.

And when the seven years were ended save a day, the young Lady stood in her Chamber Window, and wept sore, saying, Woe and alas, as to morrow my Love promised to be with me again from the Holy Land : and also the King of Hungary to morrow will be here to marry me, according to my Fathers promise : and if my love comes not at a certain hour, then am I utterly deceived of the inward love I bear to him.

When

When the day came, the King hasted toward the Emperoz to marry his Daughter, and was royally arrayed in Purple. And while the King was riding on his way, there came a Knight riding on his way, who said, I am of the Empire of Rome, and now am lately come from the Holy Land, and I am ready to do you the best Service I can. And as they rode talking by the way, it began to rain so fast, that all the Kings Apparel was soze wet: Then said the Knight, My Lord ye have done foolishly, for as much as ye brought not with you your house: then said the King, Why speakest thou so? My House is large and broad, and made of stones, and mortar, how should I bring that with me, my house? thou speak'st like a fool. When this was said, they rode on till they came to a great deep water, and the King smote his Horse with his Spurs, and leapt into the water, so that he was almost drowned. When the Knight saw this, and was over on the other side of the Water without peril, and he said to the King, Ye were in peril, and therefore ye did foolishly, because ye brought not with you your Bridge. Then said the King, thou speakest strangely, my Bridge is made of Lime, and Stone, and containeth in quality more than half a Mile: How should I then bear with me my Bridge? there

## The History of

therefore thou speakest foolishly. Well said the Knight, my foolishness may turn thee to wisdom. When the King had ridden a little further, he asked the Knight what time of day it was. Then said the Knight if any man hath list to eat, it is time of the day to eat, wherefore my Lord, pray take a modicum with me, for that is no dishonour to you, but great honour to me before the states of this Empire: Then said the King I will gladly eat with thee. They sat both down in a fair Vine Garden, and there dined together, both the King and the Knight. And when Dinner was done, and that the King had washed, the Knight said unto the King, My Lord ye have done foolishly, for that ye brought not with you your Father and Mother. Then said the King, what sayest thou? My Father is dead, and my Mother is old and may not travel, how should I then bring them with me? therefore to say the truth, a foolishher man than thou art did I never hear. Then said the Knight, every work is praised at the end.

When the Knight had ridden a little further, and nigh to the Emperors Palace, he asked leave to go from him, for he knew a nearer way to the Palace, to the young Lady, that he might come first, and carry her away with him. Then said the King, I pray thee

thee tell me by what place thou purporest to ride? then said the Knight I shall tell you the Truth: This day seven years I left a Net in a place, and now I purpose to visit it, and draw it to me, and if it be whole, then will I take it to me, and keep it as a precious Jewel; if it be broken, then will I leave it: and when he had thus said, he took his leave of the King, and rode forth, but the King kept the broad Highway.

When the Emperour heard of the Kings coming, he went towards him with a great company, and royally received him, causing him to shift his wet Cloths, and to put on fresh Apparel. And when the Emperour and the King were set at meat, the Emperour welcomed him with all the cheer and solace that he could. And when he had eaten, the Emperour asked tidings of the King: My Lord, said he, I shall tell you what I have heard this day by the way: There came a Knight to me and reverently saluted me; and anon after there fell a great Rain, and greatly spoiled my Apparel. And anon the Knight said, Sir, ye have done foolishly, for that ye brought not with you your House. Then said the Emperour, what cloathing had the Knight on? A cloak quoth the King. Then said the Emperour, sure that was a wise man,

## The History of

man, for the House whereof he spake was a Cloak, and therefore he said to you, that you did foolishly, because you came without your Cloak, then your Cloaths had not been spoiled with Raine. Then said the King, when he had ridden a little further, we came to a deep water, and I smote my Horse with my Spurs, and I was almost drowned, but he rid through the water without any peril: then said he to me, you did foolishly for that you brought not with you your Bridge. Merily said the Emperour, he saith truth, for he called the Squires the Bridge, that should have ridden before you, and assayed the deepness of the Water. Then said the King, we rode further, and at the last he prayed me to Dine with him. And when he had dined, he said, I did unwisely, because I brought not with me my Father and Mother. Truly said the Emperour, he was a wise man, and saith: for he called your Father and Mother, Bread and Wine, and other Victual. Then said the King, we rode further, and anon after he asked me leave to go from me, and I asked earnestly whether he went: and he answered again, and said, this day seven years, I left a Net in a private place, and now I will ride to see it; and if it be broken and torn, then will I leave it, but if it be as I left it, then shall it be unto me right precious,



## Gesta Romanorum.

precious. When the Emperoz heard this, he cryed with a loud voice and said, O ye my Knights and Seruants, come ye with me speedily unto my Daughters Chamber, for surely that is the Net of which he spake; and forthwith his Knights and Seruants went unto his Daughters Chamber, and found her not, for the aforesaid Knight had taken her with him. And thus the King was deceived of the Damsel, and he went home again to his own Country ashamed.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperoz is our Lord Jesus Christ, and his fair Daughter is everlasting life, which the Emperoz had ordained for Kings, Knights and other men: The Knight that loved this young Lady, is every good Christian soul, which holdeth himself not worthy to come into the sight of God unto such joy, as the Apostle saith, The sufferings of this time are not worthy to attain to the glory that is to come. This Knight was seven years absent from his love; like as a good Christian all days of his life should labour and travel in fulfilling the seven works of Mercy. By the King that came without a Cloak in the rain, is to be understood, some mighty men in this World, which have Cloaks to cover all their other cloaths. By this

## The History of

this Cloak, is understood Charity; as the Apostle saith: Charity covereth a multitude of sins: but many men have not this Cloak; wherefore they are ~~not~~ with the Rain of Pride, Avarice and Letchery. This King also was almost drowned, because he lacked his Bridge, that is perfect Faith: for as we see that no men pass over a great Water, broad and deep without a Bridge, or some other thing that is able to bear him: Right so, without Faith it is impossible to please God: for Christ saith, If ye have faith as a grain of Mustard-seed, then you may say to the Hills remove out of your places, and they shall remove. But many of us now adays have very feeble Faith, and therefore do suddenly fall into the clay of desperation, and by deadly sins oftentimes offend God. Also the King had not brought with him his Father and Mother: By the Father which is cause of Generation, is understood Humility, without which there is no Vertue in any man, and thereto accordeth St. Gregory, saying, He that gathereth all other Vertues without Humility, is like a Man that casteth dust into the Wind. His Mother betokeneth Hope: Therefore he that will obtain everlasting blessed life, must have the Cloak of Charity, the Bridge of Faith, and a Father of meekness,

ness, and a Mother of Hope, as the Apostle saith.

Also this Knight went the narrow way, and the King the broad way: for he that will be saved must go a straight way; that is, the way of Abstinence, Alms-deeds, Charity and Repentance. Of the which way speaketh the Apostle. The way is straight that leadeth to everlasting Life. But many men go the other way which leadeth to Hell, that is by the way of the fleshly lust: and such men go out of the way of everlasting Life. Therefore study we to walk the narrow way, that thereby we may obtain everlasting life.

### The Argument.

By the History is figured, as appeareth in the Moral, the Soul of every good Christian, held of him as his Daughter: but being seduced, carried away and defiled by Satan her foul enemy; she is reduced by the help and valiant prowess of her heavenly Champion Christ Jesus, unto her former Habitation. Yet man being ungrateful to his Redeemer, forgetteth his duty, and for good rewardeth evil to his Champion Christ Jesus, delivering him to be judged by the Law, as an Offender: but when the Champion avoucheth what he hath done for man and his Soul, then he is with shame of his ingratitude constrained to remorse, and call for grace to repent and amend his life, that by the death of his Champion Christ, he may obtain eternal Life.

### The fifteenth History.

**S**ometime dwelt in Rome a noble Emperour named Agias, which had retained unto him

## The History of

him a Knight named Gerard, which was a worthy Warriour, nevertheless he was as a Lamb in the Emperors Court, but in the Field he was like a Lion. This Emperour had a faire Daughter, whom the strong and mighty Carl of Pelester carried by force away and defiled, which more displeased the Emperour then the carrying her away. Therefore he called unto him his Council, and said, Dear friends, the violence done to me in deflowring of my Daughter is not unknown to you, and therefore I purpose to give battel to the Carl: wherefore I pray you to be ready at a day, that ye may proceed with me in battel. And they said: Sir, we be ready to live and dye with you in battle.

When the appointed day of battel came, they met on both sides, and a cruel sharp conflict was prosecuted on both sides, and almost all on the Emperors part was slain. And as the Emperour himself was forcibly assailed, the Knight Gerard put himself among the Enemies before the Emperour, and fought manfully, and so the Emperour escaped, and the Knight abode and slew the Carl, nevertheless the Knight had divers wounds; notwithstanding this, he abode still till the blood ran down to his foot. And when his enemies saw that the Carl was slain, they fled, and the Knight with his people followed on the chase

chase till they came to the place where the Emperors Daughter was, and led her with him. And thus with triumph and victory he returned again to the Emperoz. For the which victory, and re-obtaining of the Emperors Daughter, he was greatly praised of all people. Not long after it befel, that this Knight had a Suite in the Emperors Court, wherefore the Knight came unto the Emperoz, and prayed him meekly to be favourable to his cause: and furthermore desired him to do reason touching his honest demand.

When the Emperoz had heard him, he called to him a Iudg, and said, Sir, Our Will is, that you do all equity unto this Knight. And when the Knight heard this, he cryed with a loud voice, Alas, alas, who ever heard of such an Emperoz: Thou wert (said he) in battel, where thy head should have been smitten off, and I in mine own person (and none other man) put my self in jeopardy for thee: and now thou hast assigned another man to be judge in my Cause: Alas that ever thou wert bozn! and with that word the Knight put off all his cloaths, and shewed the wounds that he had receiued in the battel unto all the men that were there present, and said, Lo, what I have suffered for thee O Emperoz; I did put no other man in my stead, and now thou assignest another man

## The History of

in my cause. Soothly I say to thee, that I never served such a Lord before.

When the Emperoz heard this, being almost confounded in himself, he said: O dear Friend, all that thou sayest is truth, thou savedst me from death, thou didst re-obtain my Daughter again, and for my sake thou hast suffered many wounds: verily it is right that I in my own person come down and make an end of thy cause, so as may be to thy content, and to mine honour.

And then the Emperoz laboured very busily in this matter, and made thereof an end according to the Knights request: wherefore all men greatly commended the Emperoz.

## The Moral

Dear Friends, this Emperoz may be called every Christian man, or else all mankind, which had a fair Daughter, that is to say, the soul, made to the similitude of God. This Earl betokeneth the Devil, which carrieth away, defloureth by sin the soul of man, through eating the fruit of the forbidden tree: wherefore all mankind was in thraldom, till a strong and Valiant Knight came and put himself on the Cross to suffer death, as a Redeemer of mankind from the Devil. For if that had not been, we had been all partakers of thraldom everlastingly: and this Knight reduced



reduced and re-obtained the soul of man unto the Church, wherefore he suffered many great wounds in his Body. And now this Knight, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ hath a matter to do among us, that is, to find us perfect faith : wherefore he calleth on us daily, that we should be ready at all times, saying thus, Apocalyps the third : Loe I stand and knock at the door, if any man will open to me, I will come in and sup with him. But many men do as the Emperour did, the which appointed the Knight another Judge than himself, for now adays there be some men that will do no repentance for the love of him, which assigned no other man but himself to fight for us. And therefore against unthankful persons, it shall be said thus. Lo, he suffered for us on the Cross, dispoiled of all his cloathing, and shewed to us all his wounds that he suffered.

We be therefore thankful unto God for all his Graces, and be content that he may suffer for his Love some sorrowful repentance. For he that suffereth pain for the love of God in this Life, shall receive a hundred times more reward in the Life everlasting. Unto the which our Lord Jesus Christ bring all mankind. Amen.

## The History of

### The Argument.

The Soul of man is here warned to eschew the pleasant baits, and subtile crafts of the Devil, that she yield not to his allurements lest he get the vantage of this mortal course from her, and bereave her of her joys in the life to come.

### The Sixteenth History.

**T**here dwelt sometime in Rome a wise Emperour named Pompey, which had a vertuous Daughter named Aglas. This Damselfel had many endowments above all other women in that Empire.

First, she was fair and gracious in the sight of every man: also she was swift in running, that not any might overtake her by a right Race. When the Emperour understood these two properties in his Daughter, he was right joyful: Wherefore he proclaimed throughout all his Empire, that what man, poor or rich, would run with his Daughter, should have her to wife, with great riches, if he could over-run her, and come sooner to the mark than she: and if she over-run him, and came sooner to the mark than he, his head should be smitten off.

When the States of that Empire, as Dukes, Earls, Barons and Knights, heard this cry, they offered themselves one after another to run with her, but ever this young Lady over-ran them all: wherefore they lost their heads, according to the Law.

That

That time there was a poore man dwelling in Rome, which thought within himself I am a poore man, and come of poore kindred; there is a common cry made, that what man soever can out-run the Emperors Daughter, by any means, shall be promoted to great honour and riches: now therefore if I might over-run her by any manner of way, I should not only be promoted to great honour, but also all my kindred. Then this poore man provided himself of three things, whereby he might win her: First, he made a Garland of red Roses and white. Secondly, he made a rich Circle of silk cunningly wrought. Thirdly, he made a Purse of Silk, embroydered with precious stones, and within the Purse was a Ball of three colours, and upon this Ball was written this Verse, Whoso playeth with me, shall not be weary of my play. Then put he these three things in his bosom, and went forth to the Palace Gate, crying and saying, Come forth fair Lady, for I am ready to run with you, and to fulfil the Law in all things.

When the Emperour heard this, he commanded his Daughter to run with him. This young Lady went to her Chamber Window, and when she saw him, she despised him, and said, I have overcome many worthy Knights, and now must I run with

## The History of

with a Churl nevertheless, I will fulfil my Fathers Commandment.

Anon the Damsel arrayed her for to run with him. And at the last they run together, and within short space the Damsel got far before him. When the Jugler saw this, he threw forth his Garland of Flowers before her, and when the Damsel beheld and saw it, she stooped down and took it up, and set it upon her head, and that while the Jugler went before her. But when the young Damsel saw this, she wept sore, and for sorrow she threw the Garland into a ditch, and ran after him, and at the last she overtook him, and lift up her right hand, and gave him a buffet, saying : abide thou wretch, it becometh not thy Fathers Son to have me to Wife. And then this Lady did over-run him, and went before him a great space. And when the Jugler saw this, he took the Girdle out of his bosome, and threw it before her. And when she saw that, she stooped down and took it up, and girded her therewith, and the while the Jugler gat before her again. Now when she saw that, she was vexed and took the Girdle, and with her teeth tore it in thre, and then threw it from her : then she ran fast after him, and at the last overtook him, and then she gave him a great blow, saying : O wretch, thinkest thou to overcome me :  
and

and with that she ran before him again. The Jugler was slye and subtle, and kept the Purse till they were near the mark, and then he threw it before her, and anon she stooped down and took it up, and opened it, and took out the Ball, and read the Posy; Who playeth with me shall never be weary of my play: And she began to play, and continued so long in playing, till that the Jugler was before her at the mark. And thus he won the Emperors Daughter.

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour is our Saviour Jesus Christ, and his fair Daughter is the soul of man, which was made clean by the efficacy of Baptism, and was also swift in running, that is, in vertue, while she was in her cleanness, so that no deadly sin might overcome her. This Jugler that is so subtle and crafty, is the Devil, which studieth day and night to deceive Innocents. He provided him of three things. First, of the Garland, which betokeneth Pride: for why? a Garland of flowers is not set upon the arm, nor upon the foot, but upon the head that it may be seen: so Pride would be seen. Wherefore St. Augustine saith, when thou seest a Proud man be not afraid to call him the Son of the Devil; Do thou therefore as the Maiden did, be angry at thy sins, and cast off the

## The History of

Garland of Pride, into the Ditch of Repen-  
tance, and so shalt thou give the Devil a  
buffet and overcome him. But when this  
Jugler, that is, our Ghostly enemy, the De-  
vil, seeth himself overcome in one sin, then he  
returneth and tempteth a man in another sin,  
and casteth befoze men the Girdle of Letchery;  
and alas, there be many girded with this gir-  
dle of Letchery, against which Girdle speak-  
eth St. Gregory, saying, Gird we our Loins  
with the Girdle of Chastity, for whosoever is  
girt with this Girdle, shall not lose the hope of  
Life. Then casteth the Jugler (that is the  
Devil) the Purse with the Ball. The Purse  
that is open above, and close under, betokens  
the heart, which evermore should be close in  
the bottom against earthly things, and open  
above to Heavenly joy: and the two strings  
that open and shut the Purse, betoken the  
love of God, and our Neighbours: the  
Ball which is round and moveable, to every  
part of his difference, betokeneth covetous-  
ness, which moveth ever both in young and  
old; and therefore the Posy was true that  
was writtten on the Ball. Whoso playeth  
with me, that is with Covetousness, shall  
never be satisfied. Therefore saith Seneca,  
When all sins wax old, then Covetousness  
waxeth young. Therefore let us take heed  
that we play not with this Ball of Cove-  
tousness



tousness, and then without doubt we shall obtain through the merit of Christ the bliss of Heaven that never shall end. Unto the which bring us that shed his precious blood for us.

### The Argument.

The Preaching of Gods Word and every good Prayer, is a sweet sounding melody in the ears of God, and hath a promised reward of God, yet there is now and then stirred up in us, some let thereof by our whistling Adversary the Devil, and we are hindred for a time, until by the Providence of God, Godly Preachers, be sent forth, which with the Hook of Gods Word do win again our lost felicity, and so recover the fall of such Souls as were seduced and led away into joyful and perpetual fellowship of the blessed Angels of Heaven.

### The Seventeenth History.

**S**ometime dwelt in Rome a noble Emperoz and a wise named Theodosius, which loved greatly the musick of the Harp, and likewise the pastime of Hunting. It befel upon a day, as this Emperoz hunted in the Forrest he heard a sweet noise of a Harp, so that through the swætness thereof, he was almost ravished of his wits: wherefore he sought about the Forrest to find that Melody, and at the last he espied at the end of the Forrest a poore man sitting beside the water playing on a Harp full sweetly. Then said the Emperoz, Good friend, proceedeth this melody from thy Harp or no: the poore man answered and said, My reverend Lord, I shall tell you the truth.  
Here

## The History of

Here beside this water, my Wife, my Child, and I have dwelt this thirty years, and God hath given me such a gift, that when I play on my Harp, I make such melody, that the Fishes of this water come out to my hand, so that therewith my Wife, my Child, and I have been sustained in great plenty. But alas, sometime on the other side of this water there cometh a whistler, and he whistleth so sweetly, that many times the fishes forsake me and go to him: therefore my reverend Lord I crave your help against this whistler. Then said the Emperour, I shall give thee good help, I have here in my purse a golden Hook, which I shall give thee, take it, and bind it fast to the end of a Rod, and put a Worm upon the Hook, then cast thy rod into the water, and play upon the Harp, and when thou perceivest the fish to bite on the Bait, draw them up to the Land with that Hook, and then this whistling shall not avail. When the poor man heard this he rejoiced greatly, and did as he had taught him. And when this poor man began to play upon his Harp, the fishes came to the Bait, and then he took them up with his Hook, and lived thereby in better estate long time, and at last ended his life in peace and rest.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth our

our Lord Iesus Christ, which greatly delighteth to hunt the soul of mankind in the Forrest, that is the Holy Church. He loveth also the melody of the Harp, that is, he loveth much them that teach the Holy Word of God. This poor man that late by the Waters side, betokeneth the Prelates of the Church, and the Preachers of the Word of God, which ought alway to be resident in their Charge, and not in the World, that is, they should not set their delight on Worldly things. The Preachers ought to have the Harp of Holy Scripture, wherewith they may praise and honour God, and also therewith draw out of this world sinners. Therefore saith the Psalmist thus, Praise the Lord upon the Harp, sing to the Lord with a Psalm of Thanksgiving, Psal. 98. 6. But now a-days the Preacher may say, Alas, for when I preach and teach the Holy Scripture, the Devil cometh and whistleth so sweetly, that the sinners draw to him, and will not fear the word of God: but they turn themselves only to the delight of sin. The Devil deceiveth mankind by divers ways.

First, in the time of Preaching he maketh some to sleep, and them that he cannot make to sleep he causeth them to talk and clatter: and them that he cannot make to clatter, he maketh them so dull that they cannot understand

## The History of

stand what the Preacher saith : and them that he cannot beguile by these means, he putteth into them business, and causeth them to go out of the Church. Behold how many ways the Devil hath to deceive mankind, and to hinder the Word of God. Therefore every Prelate, and every Preacher ought to have the Golden Book of Gods Word against this whistling, by which they may draw sinners out of this World up to Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Argument.

Mans Soul the Daughter of our Saviour, is right dear unto him, and though he be careful for the confirming of her in the state of sincere life, yet she seduced by the suggestion of the Flesh, which being a grievous transgressor, is yet by earnest repentance, and amendment of life, brought by the Soul unto dutiful obedience towards God and man, that henceforwards continuing they together, may be partakers of everlasting blessedness.

## The Eighteenth History.

**T**here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperoz named Ptolemeus, which had but one Child a Daughter, whom he loved so much, that day and night she was guarded with armed Knights : and ober these Knights he ordained a Controller, to instruct them how they should do. He ordained also a Steward for to guide his household. And when all this was done, on a night as he lay in his bed,

bed, he resolved that he would go visit the Holy Land. And when all things were ready for his journey according to his desire, he called unto him his Steward, and said, My trusty Servant, I purpose now to go see the Holy Land, and therefore I commit my Daughter to thy keeping, and charge thee that she lack nothing, but that she have all manner of joy that appertaineth to such a Virgin. Moreover I leave to thy keeping five Knights, that be her Guard, and I charge thee that they lack nothing that is fitting for them. Also I leave with thee my Grey-hound, commanding that thou nourish and feed him as hitherto he hath been: and if thou fulfil all this that I have said, thou shalt at my coming again receive a great reward. Then said the Steward, My Lord, in all that I may I will fulfil your command. Anon the Emperour took his journey toward the City of Jerusalem, and the Steward a long time kept well the Emperours command, and the charge given him.

But at the last it befel upon a day, that this Steward had espied this young Lady walking alone in the Orchard, with whose love he was suddenly surprized; wherefore straightway, against her will he deflowered her; and when he had committed sin with her, he gave her ill Language, and hated her more than ever he loved her before, and drove her out

out of the Palace: wherefore the Damsel by this means being driven to necessity and great poverty went from dooꝝ to dooꝝ, and begged her bread. But when the Knights that were her keepers saw this, they repꝛoꝛved shamefully the Steward of this inhumane deed. Then the Steward waxed wꝛath, and foꝛ great hate that he had in his heart, he spoiled the Knights of their goods, and dꝛoꝛve them from the Palace. And when they were thus robbed and exiled, some foꝛ lack of living became Thieves, and some Men-killers, so that thꝛough this inconvenience they wꝛought great harm.

Not long after there came tidings that the Emperoz was arrived in that Land, coming homeward: And when the Steward heard this, he was greatly troubled and moved in himself, and said, It cannot be but I shall be accused foꝛ my trespasss that I have committed against the Emperozs commandment, and he hath ever been my good merciful Loꝛd; therefore better it were, that I go and meēt him with all lowliness and humility, and accuse my self unto him, and ask him Mercy, than that any other should pꝛevent me, and accuse me to my Loꝛd foꝛ Treason. Then the Steward straight put off his cloaths, save his hosen and his shirt, and took thꝛee Ropes with him in his right hand, and bare-foot went, and  
meēt



met the Emperoz. Now when the Emperoz  
 had espied him coming afar off in such man-  
 ner he wondred greatly. And when the  
 Steward was came so near that he might speak  
 to the Emperoz, he fell down on his knees  
 and saluted him reverently: Then said the  
 Emperoz, what is befallen thee, that thou  
 méetest me after such a sort: for in that thou  
 art my Steward, thou shouldest have met  
 me with a great company of noble Knights:  
 O my Lord, quoth he, there is a heavy  
 chance befallen me, for which it behoves me  
 to méet your Highness thus. Then said the  
 Emperoz what chance is befallen thee: My  
 Reberend Lord, quoth he, it behoves you first  
 to ask me, why I bring with me these thrée  
 Ropes. Then said the Emperoz why bearest  
 thou these thrée Ropes in thy hand: Then  
 answered the Steward, and said, This first  
 Rope I bring with me to bind my hands  
 and féet so hard, till the blood burst out on  
 either side, for that I have well deserved:  
 the second Rope I bring with me, to draw  
 me at the Horse tail upon the pavement, till  
 my bones be bare without flesh, for that it is  
 but due to me for the great treason I have  
 done against you. The third Rope I have  
 brought is to hang me with, upon an high  
 Gallows, so long that the Birds light on  
 my head, and upon my body feed themselves  
 on

## The History of

on my flesh, for these things are due to such  
Trespaslers and breakers of the Law as I am.  
Yet oh my Reverend Lord have mercy on  
me, for I dare not acknowledge my trespass,  
until I have obtained your pardon. Then  
said the Emperour, I see in thee great contri-  
tion, therefore tell me thy trespass, and surely  
thou shalt find Mercy and Grace. Alas, alas,  
then said the Steward, I have defiled thine  
only Daughter, and have driven her out of  
the Palace, so that now in great necessity  
she beggeth from door to door, I have also  
despoiled thy Knights of all their goods, and  
now some of them in regard they lack living,  
become Thieves and Robbers, and some Men-  
killers, and the Controuler of the Knights  
I have slain, but I fed thy Greyhound with  
the best meat as long as I might and tyed  
him with a chain, yet at the last he brake his  
chain, and went his way, so that now he run-  
neth about the Country.

When the Emperour heard this, he was  
soze astonished, and said, Hast thou deslou-  
red my Daughter whom I loved so well, and  
also despoiled my Knights, and slain their  
Controuler; and the Greyhound, which I  
loved so well, of whom I gave thee charge,  
is he gone also? Surely, were it not that I  
had forgiven thee, and that that thou hast hum-  
bled thy self so much, I would have put thee to  
the

the vilest death that could be thought : notwithstanding depart hence forthwith, and bring again my Daughter, that thou maist marry her, and if any harm hereafter befall to her, through thy default then will I double thy punishment. Also bring again my Knights and restore to them their goods, and set them in their state and offices, as they were before. Also seek diligently for my Greyhound, till thou find him and make him fast, so that hereafter in thee there be no fault found. Now when the Steward heard this he bowed down with most humble submission, and thanked the Emperour for his great mercy; and then he went forth, and sought diligently through all the Empire, until he found the Emperours Daughter and the Knights, and the Greyhound, and brought them home again. And after he had married the young Lady, and restored again the Knights goods, he ended his life in peace.

## The Moral.

Dear Friends this Emperour betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ. His Daughter betokeneth the soul of man, made after the similitude of our Lord God. The five Knights are the five Wits armed with the vertue of Baptism, for the preservation of the Soul. The Controulour of the Knights is reason, which ought to rule the Wits. The Greyhound is the flesh of man :

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## The History of

and the Steward is every man, to whom God hath given a life and soul to keep, under pain of losing everlasting life. But wretched and wicked man, not remembering what is to come, full often corrupteth and polluteth his Soul with sin, and repelleth her from her Palace of Heaven, and then wandzeth she from doo2 to doo2, that is, from sin to sin. He despoileth these five Knights of their goods, that is, the five Wits, or rather gracious vertues, taking away the natural light from their eyes, giving them bad Counsel, also moving their ears to listen unto slander and backbiting, and so forth of all the other Wits; thus some be made Thieves, and some Men-killers. The Master of these five Wits is slain, whensoever man is ruled by Will, and not by Reason. The Greyhound, that is, the Flesh, wherein a man delighteth, was fed and bound with a Chain of reason, but breaking out, full oft doth much harm.

The coming again of this Emperoz from the Holy Land, betokens the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at the day of doom to judge all mankind. Wherefore let us as the Steward did, accuse our selves of our sins first, lest the Devil and the world accuse us, then it is too late to ask Mercy: therefore put we off our cloaths betime, that is, our sinful life, and take we three Ropes in our hands. The first

Rope

Rope that should bind our hands and feet, be-  
 tokeneth the Rope of true repentance, which  
 not only ought to bind our hands and feet,  
 but also our heart within us, and our outward  
 conversation, in such austerity of life, that  
 is, that sin might void it self. Hereto accord-  
 eth Ezekiel saying thus, Whensoever the  
 sinful man doth repent himself, he shall be  
 forgiven. The second Rope for to draw the  
 Trespasser, is acknowledging of our Sins,  
 which would draw us from the beginning of  
 our life, unto our liues end, by a perfect re-  
 conciliation of our selues to God and Man, un-  
 to the time, that the flesh was fallen to the  
 bones, that is, till the lust of flesh be turn-  
 ed away by the Stones of repentance. For euen  
 as the stone by nature is hard, right so the  
 way of repentance ought to be hard. The  
 third Rope that should hang the Fellow, is the  
 Rope of amendment of life: For it is writ-  
 ten in Holy Scripture, There is more joy in  
 Heaven over one sinner that returneth unto the  
 Lord in time, than over ninety and nine just  
 persons.

Like as the Steward brought again the  
 Emperors Daughter, so it behoveth us to  
 seek about by a fruitful Faith until we find  
 again our lost Soul, and to bring her again  
 to the Church, to rule well our five Wits, to  
 feed our Greyhound we should, and make  
 our

## The History of

our life so clean and pure, that we fall not again to sin, for fear that it fortune to us worse, and that we have no leisure to ask mercy again at our needs; and if we fulfil all this truly unto our lives end, without doubt we shall obtain everlasting life. To the which our Lord bring us all. Amen.

### The Argument.

The violating our innocency is not imitating the Law of God, here described, which being adjudged after the Law is death, but by the merits of Christ our Saviour, we obtain Salvation.

### The Nineteenth History.

**I**N Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperour, and a wise, named Ensenne, who ordained a Law, that whosoever ravished a Virgin, should be at her discretion, whether she would put him to death, or would take him to her Husband.

It befel after that a man ravished one night two fair Maidens: the first Damself which he ravished, desired that he should dye, but the second desired him to her Husband. The Ravisher was taken and led before the Judge, that he might satisfie both these Damselfs according to the equity of the cause. The first Damself desired his death, according to the Law, then said the second I desire to have him to my Husband: and like as thou hast the Law for thee, so in like case I have for me, and also my petition is much better than yours.

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## Gesta Romanorum.

for it is more charitable : therefore methinks in my reason that the Judge should give sentence to the favour and furtherance of my desire. When the Judge heard the mercy of the second Damsel, he gave judgment that he should take her to Wife, and so it was done.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, the Ravisher betokeneth every sinner, which ravisheth the Holy Commandments of God by sin, for the Devil can never overcome man, except he be suffered by the will : For St. Augustine saith, It is not sin except it be voluntary. The Ravisher also is called before the Justice, when the Soul is departed from the Body : and anon, the first Damsel (Innocency) laid against the sinner, that he ought to dye everlastingly by the Law of Righteousness : But the other Maid (that is, Christs Merits) alleged for him, how the mercy of God ought to help by hearty Repentance, and acknowledging of sins, which is the high way to everlasting life. Unto the which God bring us all. Amen.

### The Argument.

The Mother and the Child of Grace, and of the Reprobate is here declared, and set forth : but which of them shall be saved, and which of them shall be damned is not yet revealed to the World, until the last and dreadful day of judgment.

## The History of

### The 20. History.

**S**ometime there reign'd in Rome a mighty Emperoz, and a rich, named Lypodus which took to Wife a fair Virgin and gentle, the Daughter of the King of Assyria. This young Lady conceived and bare him a Son, and in the birth she died: not long after her decease the Emperoz married another Wife, and had by her a Son; and immediately after the second Child was bozn, he sent them both into a strange Country, there to be brought up. Now when the Children had been there long, the Empress said, My Reverend Lord, ten years be now fully expired since I bare my Son, and yet I never saw him but once, and that was the first day of his birth, therefore I beseech you my Lord, to send for him, to the end, that I may once rejoyce me in his sight. Then said the Emperoz I have another child by my first wife, and if I send for thy Son, then must I send for them both: notwithstanding at the Empress request he sent for them both. And when they were come, they were of passing feature, and well trained up, and so passing like in all things, that hardly the one might be known from the other, but the Father knew the difference.

Then said the Mother of the second Child, my Lord, I pray you tell me which of these is my Son. Then the Emperoz called to him that

that Son that he begat on his first Wife. When the Emperess heard this, she gave all care to nourish him, and neglected the other Child. Now when the Emperoz saw this, he said, truly I deceived thee, without doubt this is not thy Son, but one of them two is thy Son. Then said the Mother, My Lord, I most earnestly entreat you, that you would tell me without dissembling, which of them is my Son. The Emperoz answered and said, certainly, I will not tell you, until they be both come to mans estate, and this is my reason: First, I told you that this was your Son, and you cherished him, and forsook that other: and when I told you that this was your Son, then you slightly regarded the first, and cherished the second, therefore my desire is, that thou cherish them both alike, that I may have like joy of them. When the Emperess heard this she cherished them both alike. And when they were both at age, the Emperoz made a great Feast, and before all his Nobles he told his wife openly which was her Son. Then rejoyced the Emperess greatly, and when she had lived a good time, she ended her life in peace and rest.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperozs Son be-  
tokeneth those that be chosen to everlasting  
life, and those that be not chosen. The  
Mother

## The History of

Whether of them is the providence of God that nourisheth them both : therefore our Lord will not that his Providence should let the world know which be chosen, and which be not chosen : For if she knew that, then would she love the one and hate the other, and so Charity among us would be overthrowen, and we should live in discord and strife : but Truth at the day of Judgment shall tell to us, which of them shall be saved, and which of them shall be damned. Therefore pray we in this world, that we may come to the everlasting Feast in Heaven. Unto the which God bring us all. Amen.

## The Argument.

The ungodly of this World will not take any pains to live virtuously, and yet oftentimes they are enriched for the most part with the riches of Fortune, but they are not careful of the reward laid up for the Righteous in Heaven, neither do they fear the torments of Hell appointed for the Reprobates.

## The 21. History.

**S**ometime there dwelt in Rome a Noble Emperoz, named Polinus, which had thre Sons whom he loved much. It befel upon a day, when this Emperoz lay upon his bed, he bethought him to which of his Sons he might give his Empire after his decease. Then called he to him his thre Sons, and said, which of you is most skilful, he shall have mine

## Gesta Romanorum.

mine Empire after my decease. The first Son answered and said, the Empire by reason should be mine, for I am so slothful that if my foot were in the fire, I had rather it should be burnt than I would take it out. Then said the second I am (quoth he) more fit for the Empire than thou, for though there were a Cord about my Neck wherewith I should be hanged, and if I had a sharp Sword in my hand, for very sloth I would not once put forth my hand to cut the Cord to save my life. And when these two Brethren had thus said, then the third spake for himself thus, I ought to be Emperour before you both, for I exceed you in sloth, and I will prove it thus: I lie upright in my bed, and there droppeth water upon my eyes, and for very sloth I will not move my head, neither to the right side of the bed, nor to the left, to save my self. When the Emperour heard this he bequeathed his Empire unto the youngest, as to the slothfullest of the Brethren.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth the Devil, which is the Lord and Father over the ungodly in this World. By the first Son is understood, a man that chanceth into evil company, by which he falleth into misdeameour, and had rather be burnt in the fire of sin then depart from them. The  
second

## The History of

second Son betokeneth him that knows himself to be fast bound with the bond of sin, wherewith he's to be hang'd on the Gallows of Hell, and is so slothful, that he will not cut it away with the Sword of Repentance. By the third Son is understood a man that hears of the joys of Heaven, and the pains of Hell, yet will not move himself to the right nor to the left side to forsake his sins, for fear of eternal pain: such a man without doubt, for his sloth shall receive the Kingdom of Hell; From which keep us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

## The Argument.

Mans Soul is a Captain General, with his Forces of Armed Vertues, fight against a strong City, the World, wherein is the Castle of Vanity, and in that are poysoned Forces of sin, as mortal enemies of mankind, against whom well to fight, is the means to obtain the Victory and triumph everlastingly.

## The 22. History.

**A**lexander the mighty Emperoz sometime ruled, who beleaged a City of the King of Egypt with a great Host; nevertheless this Emperoz lost many worthy Knights without any hurt or streak. And thus from day to day his people died suddenly, whereat this Alexander wondred greatly, and was sorrowful therefore in his mind, he call'd unto him his wisest Philosophers that might be found, and demanded of them why his people  
dyed



died thus suddenly without any wounds: the Philosophers answered and said, My Lord, it is no wonder, for upon the Walls of that Castle within the City is a Cockatrice, through whose sight your men dye, for they are infected with a venome that cometh from her eyes, and thereupon they dye.

Then this Alexander asked if there were any remedy against the Cockatrice. The Philosophers answered, and said, My Lord, there is good remedy, for if it please you to set up a large Mirrour of clear Glas over against the Cockatrice, between your Host and the wall of the City, when the Cockatrice beholdeth her self in the Mirrour the deadly nature of the venomous sight shall return again to her self, and thus she shall die, and your men thereby shall be saved. Then the Emperour did as the Philosophers counselled him, and set up forthwith a large Mirrour of excellent clear glass, and thus was the Cockatrice slain, and the Emperour with his Host made an assault on the City, and obtained the Victory.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour may be called every Christian man, which ought to gather an Host of Vertue, for without Vertue no man can fight Spiritually. The City against which ye shall fight, is the World, wherein

## The History of

wherein there is an high Castle, that is, Vanity of Vanities, and all is but Vanity. In this Vanity standeth the Cockatrice, that is, pride of life; desire of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, wherefore this pride infecteth so many, that they dye in sin everlastingly: wherefore the best remedy against this pride is the consideration of our uncleanness, how we came naked into the World. And if it be asked why a man is proud, it may be answered thus, for default of cloathing himself with vertues: what shall we do when we dye thus ghosly, but set up a pure mirrour of Conscience, that by that Conscience, we may consider our slidings, and our hittleness, as in a Glass where we may see our default: And if we do thus without doubt the Cockatrice, that is, pride of life, desire of the eyes, and lust of the flesh, shall be utterly destroyed, and we shall obtain the victory of this worldly City, and by Christs merits win everlasting life. Unto the which he bring us all. Amen.

## The Argument.

The Soul of man being conversant in the Body with the Flesh, she seeketh by sinister means to overthrow the Soul with her unclean lusts after the World, where though the Soul for a time suffereth Shipwrack of Worldly Felicity, yet the Lion of the Tribe of Juda is of power not only to comfort her in necessity, and to make her to repossess her former estate in the world to come.

The

## The 23. History.

**A** Mighty Emperoz sometime ruled the Romans, named Archelaus, who in his old age espoused a fair Lady, whom a young Knight loved, and had to do with her as oft as he list. It befel on a night, that this Emperoz bethought him in his Bed, to visit the City of Jerusalem, where without any more delay he obtained all things necessary for his journey, and taking his leave of the Empress, and of the States of the Empire, went towards the said City.

When the Empress heard this, she took the Master of the Ship aside, and said, if thou wilt consent to me, and be true, ask of me what thou wilt, and thou shalt be sure to have it. The Master of the Ship was corrupt with Covetousness, and said: O my dear Lady, whatsoever thou command me, I will without fail fulfil it, so that thou wilt reward me for my labour. Then said the Empress, before thou dost ought for me, I will give thee whatever thou desirest, so that thou wilt swear to be true to me, and keep my counsel. Then the Master of the Ship swore to be true to her.

Then said the Empress, My Lord goeth with you in your Ship, therefore when he is in the midst of the Sea, cast him overboard, that he may be drowned, and thou shalt have what thou

## The History of

thou wilt for thy reward. Then the Master of the Ship swore a great Oath, and said, By the great God Jupiter, after he cometh once within my Ship, you shall never see him more. Then the Lady gave him as much Gold as he would have, and he went to his Ship.

And within short time after the Emperour took Shipping, and when it was in the midst of the Sea, the Master of the Ship took the Emperour and threw him overboard into the Sea. When the Master returned again, he told the Emperours how he cast the Emperour into the Sea, whereof he was right glad.

This Emperour that was cast into the Sea, had learned in his youth to swim, and swam to an Island in the Sea, and when he was faint, and like to be drowned, he prayed to God to be his help. At length he came into a little Island, wherein was nothing but Lyons and Leopards, and such other beasts as swam thither from other Lands. When the Emperour had got to Land in that Isle, he espied a young Lion fighting with an old Leopard, and the Lion was too weak, and was almost overcome. Now the Emperour had great compassion on the Lion, and drew out his sword and forthwith slew the Leopard. The Lion from that time forth followed the Emperour, and would not leave him for any thing, but every

every day the prey that the Lyon took, he brought and laid at the Emperors feet, and the Emperoz smote fire with a flint stone, and boyled the Body of the beasts in the skin : and thus was he fed by a long season. At length, as he walked by the Sea-shore, he saw a godly Ship come sailing by, with a high voice he cryed. And when the Ship-men heard the voice, they wondred what it might be, wherefore they sailed toward him : and when they were come near him, he said, Good friends, take me with you, and I shall pay you a good fraught. So they took him into their Ship, and the Lion followed him, swimming in the Sea after the Ship : and when the Lion was near drowned, the Ship-men had pity on him, and took him into the Ship. Now when the Emperoz came to Land, he payed his fraught, and went forth with the Lion till he came near his own Palace, where he heard Trumpets, and all other Musick, and as he marvell'd what it might be, there came from the Palace a Squire toward him, that he knew, but the Squire knew not him : To whom the Emperoz said thus, Good friend, I pray thee tell me what is the cause of this Melody ? The Squire answered and said, the Emperess is married this day and all the States of the Empire are at the Feast, and therefore they make such Melody. Then  
said

said the Emperoz to the Squire, where is  
her Husband that was the Emperoz before?  
The Squire said, that he went to the Holy  
Land, and was drowned by the way. Then  
the Emperoz said, Sir, I pray you tell the  
Empress and the Lord that shall be her hus-  
band, that (I to please them) will shew their  
Majesties rare sport with my Lion. The  
Squire granted to do his errand, and went  
in and told his Lord and Lady, that a goodly  
old man was at the Gate, that would shew  
them sport with his Lion. Then said the  
new married Lady, bring him in, he per-  
chance may deserue meat for's play. When  
the Emperoz with his Lion was brought  
in, the Lion without any setting on, ran  
upon the young Knight that was newly mar-  
ried, and slew him, and when he had so  
done, he ran upon the Empress also, and de-  
voured her to the bones, before all the Lords  
of the Empire. And when the Nobles saw  
this, they were greatly agast, and began to  
flee. But the Emperoz with his fair speech  
perswaded them, and said, Lo, this is the  
Vengeance of God, for this my Wife, hath  
used Adultery long time with this Knight  
that I perch dead, and he practiseth my death  
with the Master of the Ship, and thereupon  
he threw me into the Sea, but God saved me  
from death; and because I helpt once this  
Lion



Lion at a need, he never forsook me since, and now as ye all see, when I came into the Palace, without provoking of me he hath slain both the Adulterers; and therefore understand ye for truth, that I am your Emperoz. Now when they heard this, they looked more seriously upon him, and discerned him to be their Emperoz, and greatly rejoycing, praised God for that miracle, which had saved their Lord and Emperoz. And they lived together a long time in Peace.

The Moral.

Dear Friends, by this Emperoz we may understand every Christian man that purposeth to visit the City of Jerusalem, that is, to get everlasting life, through Faith. But his Wife, that is, the wretched flesh, murmureth against the Soul, and loveth better an adulterer, that is, deadly sin, than her Husband. This Emperoz went into a Ship, taking his journey towards the City of Jerusalem, that is, he went to the Church of God, which is the way to God: but the Wife, that is, fleshly men, accused him to the Master of the Ship, that is, to the Prelates of the Church, for great reward which oftentimes do blind the sight of many Justices, whereby many perfect men be cast out of the Ship into the Sea, to be drowned, that is, out of the Church into the Sea of this world. But what shall we do then

## The History of

at this, thus to be troubled in this World, certainly, this ought he to do : let him learn to swim, that is, let him put all his hope in God, and by his Grace he shall come to an Island, that is, the Religion of heart, and then he shall love ever the better to keep himself out of this World, and therefore St. James saith, A pure Religion and undefiled before God, even the Father is this, &c. And he that is in this Religion shall find a Lion, whom he be-  
hoveth to have against the Devil. This Lion is our Lord Jesus Christ that came of the Tribe of Juda, who fighted ever against the Devil ; and if a man hath help, this Lion, that is, hath served God against his enemies at any time, he may trust well, that he will not forsake him at his need, according to the Psalmist, saying, I am with him in trouble. By this Lion thou must tame thy wife, that is, thy flesh, with Repentance; and slay thy sin, and then without doubt thou shalt obtain the Empire of Heaven. Unto the which bring us all our Lord Jesus. Amen.

## The Argument.

The Soul of man espoused to Christ in Baptism, yet dyeth by means of sin, leaving behind her Son, called Reason, or rather the Word of God, which searcheth the disease of man, her sinful Father ; and being sent for to cure the Malady of his step-mothers will, he refuseth to administer ghostly comforts unto her.

The

## The 24. History.

**S**ometime there dwelt in Rome a Noble Emperoz, named Gregory, who married a vertuous and beautiful Lady to his Wife. This young Lady in due process of time, conceived and bare a Son, a fair and an amiable Child. When this Child was ten days old, his Mother the Empress dyed: not long after the Emperoz married another Wife: The second Wife could not affect or love by any means the Emperors Son, but did him all the shame and reproach that she might. When the Emperoz perceived this, willing to please his Wife, he exiled his Son out of his Empire. And when the Son was exiled, he went and studied Physick, so that within a short time he was a skilful and cunning Physician. It besel not long after, that the Emperoz his Father sickned, and was almost at deaths doze; wherefore, when he heard that his Son was so good a Physician, he sent for him by Letters, praying him that he would come to him without delay. Now the Son willing to obey his Fathers commandment, in all haste came to him, and when he had felt his Pulses, he discerned the sickness, and ministered Physick to him, whereby he shortly recovered.

Not long after, the Empress his Stepmother began to fall sick, and many Physicians

## The History of

ans said she would dye. And when the Emperoz heard this, he sent to his Son to help her of her sickness. Then said his Son, certainly Father, I will lay no hand on her. Then the Emperoz began to wax wroth, and said, If thou wilt not obey my Commandment, thou shalt henceforth depart my Empire. His Son answered and said, If thou do so (dear Father) you do unrightly, for well you know that you exiled me of your Empire through her suggestion, and my absence was the cause of your sickness, now my presence is cause of her sickness, and therefore I will not meddle with her, nor use any Physick unto her, for oftentimes Physicians are deceived in their Patients; therefore I dare lay no hand on her, for if it should fortune her to dye, men would judge that my Physick were the cause thereof. Then said the Emperoz, she hath the very same sickness that I had. His Son answered and said, though she have the same sickness, nevertheless you are not both of one constitution: for whatsoever I did to you, you were therewith content, and when you saw me come within the Palace, you rejoyced at my coming, and was greatly pleased with the sight of me that you begat: But when this my step-mother saw me, she was angry, and took scorn at her heart, and therefore if I should speak to her, her sorrow would much more

more encrease, and if I should offer to touch her, she would be in rage. Also a Physician profiteth little except the Patient take pleasure in him. Now none can cure her of envy. And when he had spoken his mind, he took his leave and departed thence.

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth every Christian man, which is married to Christ in the Baptism of regeneration, for then the Soul is made the spouse of Christ, on whom our Saviour begetteth a Son, that is, the knowledge of his Word and Will. But when the Child grew up to some ten years of age, or some encrease of verue, his Mother Christianity died: then vertue departed from youth, and afterwards the Christian man his Father matcheth himself with another Woman, the step-mother of the said youth, named ignorant Envy, which in no wise could affect the Emperours Son of knowledge, wherefore she caused him to be banished into a strange Country, from his Father and her both. It happened that the good Christian man, being over-ruled by his Wife, falleth sick, and sendeth for his Son, that is, knowledge of Gods Word and Will, to cure him as his Physician, who dutifully performeth the same. But his step-mother falling sick at the sight of the Emperours Son, though the

G 3

Christian

## The History of

Christian man her Husband labours to him to cure her, as a good Physician of her Soul; yet she not liking his good endeavour to win her from her ignorant envy of the Truth, is very hardly healed of her sickness, but oftentimes dyed in her ignorant envy and wilful wickedness, without any hope of health or life unto eternal Salvation, so that Physician comes hither too late.

## The Argument.

Jesus Christ the Son of God ought to be cherished and fostered in our hearts by faith and good life: which is taken from us when we are not thankful unto him for his graces. Wherefore the preachers of Gods Word, as good Physicians, are sent unto us, for to admonish and warn us to persevere in amendment of life, and constant hope in Christs merits, and so to harbour him in our hearts, he may thereby bestow on us the promotion of heavenly blifs.

## The 25. History.

Sometimes there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperoz named Folenus, who took to wife the Kings Daughter of Germany, a fair Lady and courteous, which within short time conceived and bare a Son. When the Child was born, the States of the Empire came to the Emperoz, and every one besought the Emperoz, to have the bringing up of his Son. The Emperoz answered, and said, to morrow shall be a Turney, and there



there you shall be, and which of you doth best, and obtaineth the victoꝝ, he shall have the keeping of my Son: and if he train him up well, I shall promote him to great dignity and honour, and if he do the contrary he shall dye the foulest death that can be thought.

Then they said, Most Reverend Lord, all this pleaseth us well. On the morrow, when every man was come to the Tourney, the States jested valiantly: but at length came a valiant Knight named Josias, who so couragiously bare himself there, that he obtained the victoꝝ: and immediately after the Tourney was all done, this Josias took the Child and led him home with him. And because the Emperors Son should be received with state in his Country, he sent befoze to his Castle, and commanded his Officers that they should royally provide for him, and that the Childs Lodging should be in the midst of the Castle, and also that the seven Sciences should be portraid about the Childs Bed, that when the Child waketh out of his sleep, he might lie in his bed and behold the same. The Knight had a wholesome Well by the Childs bed side, wherein he used to bathe himself, and the Knights wife bear the key of the Well, and there was a Window whereat the Sun might comfortably shine upon him. It fortunèd upon a day, that the Lady left

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open

## The History of

open the Window through negligence, which being done, thither came a Bear, and seeing the Window open, went to the Well and bathed him therein, of whose bathing the Well savoured after, through the great heat which was at that time in the hunted Bear, whereby whosoever drank of the water, waxed leproous within short time after. So it fortuned that the Lord and the Lady with all the Household, by drinking of the water of that Well became Lepers, notwithstanding it appeared not presently. Not long after it fortuned there came a great Eagle in at the Window where the Emperors Son lay, and bare the Child away out of the Cradle. Now when the Lord of the Castle heard this, he wept bitterly, and said, alas, alas, woe is me wretched creature, that ever I was born, what shall I do: now I am the Son of Death, for I am become a loathsome Leper, and so is my Wife with all my Household, also the Emperors Son is lost and gone.

Now while he thus mourned, there came to him a Physician, and said, Sir, if you will do after my counsel, you shall not repent you; First, it behoveth you, your Wife, and all your Household to be let blood, and after that to be bathed and clean washed, and then I will apply to you my medicine: and when you are whole, then shall you and your Household walk  
up

## Gesta Romanorum.

up to the mountains, and seek the Emperors Son, for the Eagle hath let it fall there in some place. Then the Lord followed the advice and counsel thus given them by the Physician, and forthwith he and all his Household were let blood, and received the medicine, and within a short time after were all whole and sound. When they were thus healed, he took his Horse, accompanied with three men, and rode forth to see the Child, and at last he found him whole and sound lying in a valley, whereat he greatly rejoiced. And incontinently with great joy and gladness he led the Child home to the Emperor his Father. Now when the Emperor saw his Son in good health, he was right glad, and promoted him to great honour. And so after that he had long time lived there in noble state, he after ended his life in peace and rest.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth the Father of Heaven, his Son betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, to nourish whom many men desire, at such time as they received the Sacrament of his death and passion. He nourisheth him best that justeth with the Devil and overcometh him by godly life. This Knight that took his Child with him, betokeneth a good Christian man that evermore abstaineth truly from being evil, and laboureth continually

## The History of

ally to do good to all men. Therefore do we as the Knight did; send Messengers before to prepare and make clean the Castle of our hearts, from all spots of sin, by lively Faith, and so shall this Child Jesus rest in the midst of our hearts.

The Well betokeneth Mercy which ought to be next our Lord, for whosoever is without mercy and truth, may not nourish the blessed Child Jesus; but it happened oft, that the Knights Wife, that is, the flesh of man, beareth the Key of Mercy, and oft leaveth that Well open, and then comes the Bear, that is, the Devil, and leaveth his loathsome filth in the Well of Mercy, and whosoever tasteth thereof, shall be infected with a Leprosie of sin. The window, wherein the Sun shined is the Grace of the Holy Ghost, by whom men are comforted Ghostly. By this Window the Eagle cometh in, that is, the flying affections of the wicked world, carrying away the knowledge of God from us, unto the vale of ignorance and security, and thou man hast great cause to weep: but what shall we do when the Child is gone, but send for a skilful Physician, that is, a discret Minister of the word of God, which shall give him counsel to let him blood, and all his household, that is to put out sin through acknowledging thereof, and reconciling himself with earnest repentance unto his Heavenly Father.

Then

## Gesta Romanorum.

Then must he bathe himself with tears of contrition and compunction of heart, and after that take the Medicine of amendment of life, and so live pure and clean from all manner of sin; and when he had done thus, he must leap on the Palfrey of good perseverance from evil, and ride forth with the three men, that is, falling from evil, praying to God, and well deserving towards men, and then without doubt he shall find the Child Jesus in the valley of Humility; not on a Hill, that is Pride. And if he do this, doubtless he shall have might and power to nourish that blessed Child Jesus, for whose nourishing the Father of Heaven shall promote him unto everlasting joy. Unto the which joy he bring us that shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

### The Argument.

Christ the giver of everlasting Glory hath proclaimed a like joy and bliss in Heaven, as well to the poor as to the rich. But the rich oftentimes covering all, loseth the prerogative which the poor in heart enjoy by the providence of God: yet as he is a righteous God, he ordaineth both for the rich and poor in such sort, that if they will they may together joyfully be satisfied with the great plenty of his abundant graces.

### The 26. History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperour, named Fulgentius, which governed his people nobly, and loved them so much

## The History of

much that he made a Proclamation through-  
out all Nations, That whosoever would come  
to him, rich or poor, at a certain day, should  
have their Petition, whatsoever it were.  
When the mighty men heard this, they were  
glad, and come at the day assigned, and every  
man put forth his Petitions to the Emperoz,  
immediately their Petitions were granted and  
fulfilled, insomuch that a great part of the  
Revenues of the Empire was distributed a-  
mong them. Then every man was joyful,  
and went home again, and took possession of such  
Lands and Castles as the Emperoz had given  
them.

Straightway after, the poor men in the  
Emperors Dominions, gathered them toge-  
ther, and said, a common cry was made, that  
whosoever came to the Emperors Palace  
should have what he asked. The rich men  
have been there lately, and obtained their Pe-  
titions: therefore go we now, and try if we  
may obtain any good of the Emperoz. Now  
this Counsel liked them all, wherefore they  
went to the Emperors Palace, and there  
they put forth their Petition according to the  
Proclamation.

When the Emperoz had heard them, he  
said to them, Dear Friends, I have heard all  
your Petitions: and it is true that my Procla-  
mation was, that every man indifferently,  
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## Gesta Romanorum.

should come and have their Petitions, but the rich have been here before you, to whom I have given all that I had, save only the Royalty of my Lordship, and so have nothing left to give you. Whereto the poor men sadly replied; most gracious Sovereign, have compassion on us, and let us not go away empty, for we know well it is our own default, that we came not rather with those other rich and mighty men; but sith it is so, we crave your Grace, that we may obtain somewhat by the which we may live. Then said the Emperour, Good friends, though I have given most of my Lands, Kents, Tenements and Castles, to the rich men that came before you, nevertheless, I have kept still in my own hands the Sovereignty and Dominion over them, and that I do give to you, and so they shall be your servants, and be obedient to you all. And when the poor men heard this, they greatly rejoiced thereat, and knæled down to the Emperour and thankd him, saying, Lo, though we be come late, yet we be Lords over all those other. And with this they took their leave, and went home again. But when the rich and mighty men heard that, they were greatly moved, and ordained a common Parliament among themselves, and thus it was spoken among them: Alas, alas, how may we serve them that sometime were but Peasants, and our subjects

## The History of

subjects in all manner of things : and now they be made Lords over us. Therefore go we all with one assent to the Emperour, and pray him for redress. When this was said, they forthwith went to the Emperour, and said to him, Reverend Lord, what may this mean : Those that were our servants even while, be now our Lords : We beseech your Highness that it may not be so.

Then said the Emperour, My good friends, I do you no wrong, for my Proclamation was common, the whatsoever you asked of me you should have your Petition, and you asked only of me Lands and Honours, and all those I have granted you to your own desires, insomuch that I kept nothing for my self, and you were well content at your going hence. Now after that came the simple and poor men, and asked of me some boon, according to my Proclamation, and I had nothing to give them but only the sovereignty and dominion over you, which I kept in my hands : and when the poor men cryed so to me, I gave them the authority over you, yet I see not that you can blame me therefore : for I gave you all the Wealth which I had. Then said they, O dear and gracious Lord, we pray you let us have your help and advice in that so dangerous a case.

The Emperour answered, and said, Sirs, if you will follow my advice, I shall give ye good and profitable Counsel.

Then

## Gesta Romanorum.

Then they said, we be ready to fulfil whatsoeuer you advise us for our profit.

Then said the Emperoz, My loving Friends, you have receiued of me both Lands and Tenements, and also great plenty of honours and preferments; the which by my counsel you shall impart to the poore men, that they may grant unto you the Sovereignty, and that dominion which they have. When the mighty men heard this, they willingly condescended to impart their goods among the poore men, and they as willingly gave them again the Authority over them, like as they had of the rich men. And thus were they both contented, and the Emperoz was greatly commended of the people, because he so well contented both parties.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, by this Emperoz is understood our Lord Jesus Christ, which made a Proclamation by his Prophets, Patriarchs, Apostles and Preachers, that every man, both poore and rich, should come and ask everlasting joy, and without doubt they shall obtain their petitions; but the rich and mighty men ask for no other thing but worldly honour, and transitory riches, yet this World shall pass, and all the covetousness thereof: wherefore he gave them so much of worldly Wealth, that he had nothing for himself, according to the Scripture: The  
Birds

## The History of

Birds of heaven have nests and the Foxes of the earth have caves, but the Son of man hath nothing in the earth where he may put his head, Mat. 8. 20. The poore men be the meeke in heart, of whom the Lord speaketh, saying, Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven, Mat. 5. 20. So it shall seem that they have sovereignty in Heaven above the mighty men of the world; therefore these rich men ought to impart of their temporal riches to the poore men according to the Scripture: Make you friends, with riches of iniquity, that when ye shall want, they may receive you into everlasting habitations, Luke 10. 9. And according to Tob. 4. 9. Give Alms of thy substance: If thou hast but a little, be not afraid to give a little Alms. And thus ye may attain unto the Kingdom of heaven. Unto the which I beseech Almighty God bring us all.

### The Argument.

The Emperor of glory, Christ Jesus, hath two daughters, the one fair, the other foul; the fair daughter is the world, and the pleasures thereof, and the foul is poverty and trouble: The fair daughter is desired of many, the foul of few; for he that loveth the world regardeth only the vanities thereof, but he that loveth God will suffer all persecution and trouble for the obtaining of him.

### The 25. History.

**I**N Rome sometime dwelt a noble Emperor, named Domitian, which had two daughters,

ters the one of them was passing fair, but the other foul and ill favoured: Wherefore he proclaimed throughout all his Empire, that whoso would take his fair Daughter to Wife, should have no other thing with her, but her beautiful and comely personage; but whoso would marry his foul Daughter, should have all his Empire after his decease. Now when this Proclamation was made, there came many Lords that desired to marry his fair Daughter: to whom the Emperour answered thus, Sirs, ye wot not what you desire; for if ye marry her, ye shall have nothing with her, but her beautiful and comely Personage: and furthermore, if I give her to one of you, rather than to another, you will grudge; therefore, if ye will needs have her, and forsake my foul Daughter, you shall just for her, and he that winneth her shall marry her.

Then the Nobles and States of the Empire greatly rejoiced; and for the love of that beautiful Damsel they would not only just, but fight also. So they set a day of Battel, and many worthy men were slain on both sides; nevertheless one obtained the Victory, and espoused that fair Lady.

The second Daughter, which was foul and ill-favoured, seeing her Sister bestowed with great solemnity, wept daily: Wherefore the Emperour her Father came to her, and said, dear  
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## The History of

Daughter, Why mournest thou thus? Alas dear Father, quoth she, it is no wonder though I mourn, seeing my Sister is married with great honour and gladness, and every man is joyfull of her, and no man careth for my company, therefore dear Father, what I shall do I know not. Then said the Emperour, O my dear Daughter, all that is mine is thine, and it is not unknown unto thee, that he which married thy sister, had nothing with her, but her beautiful Corps: and therefore I shall proclaim in my own person, through mine Empire, that what man will marry thee, I shall assure him the Empire after my decease, by Letters patent. Then this young Lady, though she was foul and ill-favoured, nevertheless she rejoiced greatly in the promise of her Father. Shortly after the Proclamation was thus made, there came a proper and young Knight which espoused the Lady, and after the death of the Emperour, he seized upon all the Empire, and he was crowned Emperour, and she Empress; and after that, they lived together a long time in peace and rest.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, which had two Daughters, the one fair, and the other foul: The fair Daughter betokeneth the world, which is full, fair and delectable to many men. The  
foul



soul betokeneth poverty and trouble, whom few men desire to marry with. Nevertheless, a Proclamation was made by the holy Scripture, that whoso would have his fair Daughter, that is, the World should have nothing with her but her fairness, that is, the worldly vanities, which fade and fall away, like as the beauty of man: but whoso will marry the foul Daughter, that is, will voluntarily receive poverty and trouble for Gods love, without doubt he shall obtain the Empire of Heaven, according to the Scripture, saying, Ye that have forsaken all things for my love, to follow me, shall have everlasting Life.

Many Noble and worthy men have Justed for the fair Daughter, that is, have sought and travelled by Sea and by Land, in this World, for covetousness of worldly Riches, and at length there be many slain: for there is nothing here, but pride of Life, Covetousness of the eyes, and of the flesh, where through these grievous sins, all the World is put to great damage and mischief: So he that married the fair Daughter, that is the world, is he that setteth all his affections and whole desire, upon the wretchedness and vanities of this wicked world, and will not by any means forsake this vain world like a wretch. But he that marries the Daughter, that is the good Christian man, which for the love of the

## The History of

Kingdom of Heaven, and the everlasting joys thereof, forsaketh all this world; and not only doth thus, but also despiseth himself, obeying the true and everlasting God in all things; such a man certainly shall obtain the joyful and happy Empire of Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

### The Argument.

Devotion, Prayer, and Thanksgiving unto God for his Gifts, is a sweet sounding Musick, delectable in the ears of God. We are hereby warned, after our first offending, not to return to our Vomit with the Dog, nor after washing, with the Sow, to wallow in the mire: No, rather let us bathe our selves in sorrowful and hearty repentance in perseverance in good life, that we may live with Christ in everlasting joy and bliss.

### The 28. History.

**I**N Rome sometime dwelt a mighty Emperoz, named Adromicha, the which above all things loved Musick. This Emperoz had within his Palace a Well of such vertue that whosoever were drunk, by drinking the water thereof, should incontinently become fresh again, and be deliver'd from all kind of dizziness. There was also dwelling in the Emperors Court a Knight named Ydrony, whom the Emperoz loved much, but oft-times he would be drunk, which Vice the Emperoz hated above all things. And when this Knight perceived himself drunk, then

then would he go to the Well, and drink of that water, and refresh himself, so that whatsoever the Emperoz said to him he would answer him so reasonably, that no drunkenness might be seen in him, and for his witty answers he was greatly beloved of the Emperoz. Nevertheless his fellows sought to draw the Emperors love from him.

It fortuned on a day, that this Emperoz went to the Forrest, where he heard a Nightingale sing right pleasantly : oftentimes after, he would rise early in the morning, and sometime from his meat, and walk into the Wood to hear her sweet song, wherefore many of his men said among themselves : our Lord delighteth so much in the Nightingale's Song, that he reckoneth nothing our profit ; insomuch that through two things his love is withdrawn from us, that is, Ydrony the Knight, and by the sweet Song of the Nightingale. Then said an old Knight that was among them : Sirs, quoth he, if ye will follow my counsel, I shall deliver you of the Knight Ydrony, and also the Nightingale, without hurt or death. Then they answered, and said, whatsoever you advise us to do, we shall straightway fulfil, with all our hearts. When this Knight heard this, within a while after he chanced to espy this Knight Ydrony drunk, wherefore he locked fast the Well, so

The History of

when this Knight Ydrony came to refresh himself, he found the Well fast locked.

Now the Emperoz had a great business to treat of, wherefore in haste he sent for this Knight because of his great wisdom, to have his Counsel. And when he came before the Emperoz, he was so drunk that he could not move his tongue, neither had wit, nor reason, nor understanding to answer the Emperoz to his matter.

But when the Emperoz saw this, he was greatly wexed, for as much as he hated that vice: Wherefore he commanded anon, that from that day forward he should be seen no more within his Land upon pain of Death.

This hearing, his Foes they rejoyced, and said unto the old Knight: now we be delivered of this Knight Ydrony, there is no more to do, but that we may find a way to be delivered also of the Nightingale, in which the Emperoz delighted so much.

Then said the old Knight, Your ears shall hear, and your eyes shall see the Nightingale shall be destroyed shortly.

Not long after, this old Knight espied that the Nightingale used to sit upon a tree even above the aforesaid Well, whereas her Mate came and coupled with her, nevertheless in the absence of her Mate, she took oftentimes another

another Mate and coupled with him : When she had thus done , then would she descend to the Well to bathe her self, that when her Mate came, he should feel no ill savour or scent of what she had done. When the Knight had seen this, on a time he locked the Well, and when the Nightingale would have descended to bathe her self, after coupling with the other Mate, she found the Well closed: wherefore she flew up into the Tree again, and mourn'd sore in her manner, and left her song. Then came her Mate, and saw that she had done against her Nature, he returned again, and in short time brought a great multitude of Nightingals, which flew his Mate, and tare her all in pieces.

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth our Lord Iesus Christ, which loveth greatly the Song of Devotion, for when we pray we speak unto God, and when we read, God speaketh unto us. The Well that was in the Palace betokeneth acknowledging our sins to God. Therefore if any be drunk with sin, let him drink of the Well of acknowledging of his sins and without doubt he shall be safe.

This Ydony betokeneth every man that wilfully returneth again to sin after his acknowledging sin, like as the Dog, that maketh a vomit, and casteth up the meat that he

## The History of

hath eaten befoze, and afterward, when he is hungry, cometh and eateth it again. Nevertheless if a man that hath thus sinned, will drink of the Well of acknowledging his sin, he shall receive his ghostly strength.

The Pightingale that late on the Tree, betokens the Soul that sitteth on the Tree of Holy Doctrine. And her Son betokeneth the Soul that sitteth on the Tree of devout Prayers of God. But this Soul doth commit evil as oft as she consenteth to sin. Nevertheless, if she run to the Well of acknowledging of sin, and bathe her with the Water of contrition, God shall love her.

But her Foxes, that is, the Friends of Hell, seeing this, that God is merciful, they stop the Well of acknowledgment of sin, that is, they would with-draw us from dutiful acknowledgment, and from due reconciliation of our selves between us and God, and between us and man, without shame and dread of repentance, and not declare our sins. And thus, through the temptation of the Devil our Adversary, many have been exiled, and put to death everlastingly. And therefore study we to bathe our souls in this life in the Well of acknowledgment of sin, with the Water of Contrition, and then we shall be sure in the world to come to have joy everlastingly. Unto the which God bring us all, Amen.

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## Gesta Romanorum.

### The Argument.

The Soul of every good Christian man ought to prepare Armed Vertues for to withstand the assaults of the Devil. We are here put in mind of our deliverance from death, by the precious blood-shed of Jesus Christ: which is a terror to all the Devils in Hell, if we continue in Faith, and believe in him, the bulwark of our Salvation.

### The 29. History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperoz named Hermes, which had a mighty strong City, exceeding strongly walled about, and a Bell hanging in the midst of the said City; and whensoever the Emperoz went to any Battel without the City, this Bell was ever rung; but there did no man ring the Bell, but a Virgin. Within short time after, it befel, that Dragons, Serpents, and also many other venomous Beasts, im-  
poysoned much people, so that the City was almost destroyed: Wherefore the States of the City went with one accord to the Emperoz, and said, Lord, what shall we do? Lo, our people, our goods, and our City is almost destroyed, and you and we be in peril to perish, through these cruel Beasts that consume us, therefore take we good counsel, or else we are undone. Then said the Emperoz, what think you is best to be done in this matter? and how may we be best defended? Then answered one of the wisest, and said, My Lord,

## The History of

Lord, hear my counsel, and do thereafter, and you shall not repent it: You have in your Palace a Lyon, set up a piece of Timber for the purpose, and thereunto let the Lyon be nailed and made fast, and when other venomous Beasts see him thus used, they will be afraid, and forsake our City, and we shall be in safety. Then said the Emperour, it pleaseth me well that he be so used, thereby to save you. Then he took the Lyon and used him in like manner as aforesaid, which when the other Beasts saw, flew away for fear, and never more afterwards durst they come thither.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour betokeneth the Father of Heaven, the City well walled, with a Bell in the midst, betokeneth the Soul, walled about with Vertues: The Bell betokeneth a clean Conscience that warneth a man to Battel, when he should fight against the Devil, that he might arm himself before with Vertues. The Virgin that should always ring this Bell, is Reason, which is a Virgin inclined to all rightfule cleanness. The venomous Dragon that beareth the fire, betokeneth the flesh of man, which bears the fire of concupiscence, which burnt Adam our forefather, when he eat of the forbidden Apple. The venomous Beasts that poisoned the men, betokeneth the Fiends of Hell, which for the most part have

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have destroyed all mankind. The states of the City betokeneth the Patriarchs and Prophets, which besought God of counsel and remedy, that mankind might be saved, and anon it was counselled for the best remedy, that a Lyon (that is Christ) should be nailed upon the Cross, according to the Scripture saying thus, It was requisite that one man should dye for the people, lest all flesh should perish.

Then took they Christ and hung him on the Cross, for the which the Devil dreads Christian people, and dares not come nigh them; and thus by the Grace of God, Christian men shall come to everlasting bliss. Unto which bring us, the Lamb of God, which shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

The Argument.

Here is signified the thralldom of man unto Satan by sin, till Christ the Son of God descended, with the power of the Holy Ghost, to set him at liberty, and put him in possession of the Palace of everlasting felicity.

The 30. History.

**T**here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperour and a merciful, named Menelay, who ordained such a Law, that what innocent person was taken and put in prison, if he might escape and come to the Emperours Palace, he should be there safe from all manner of accusations against him in his life time. It was not long after, but is besel,

that

The History of

that a Knight was accused, wherefore he was taken and put in a strong and dark Prison, where he lay a long time, and had no light but a little Window, whereat scant light shone in, that lighted him to eat such simple meat as the Keeper brought him: Wherefore he mourned greatly, and made sorrow that he was thus fast shut up from the sight of men. Nevertheless, when the Keeper was gone, there came daily a Nightingale in at the window, and sung full sweetly, by whose song this woful Knight was oftentimes fed with joy, and when the Bird left off singing, then would she fly into the Knights bosome, and there this Knight fed her many a day, of the victual that God sent him. It befel after upon a day, that the Knight was greatly desolate of comfort. Nevertheless, the Bird that late in his bosome fed upon kernels of Nuts, and thus he said to the Bird, Sweet Bird, I have sustained thee many a day, what wilt thou give me now in my desolation to comfort me? Remember thy self well, how that thou art the creature of God, and so am I also, and therefore help me now in this my great need.

When the Bird heard this, she flew forth from his bosome, and carried from him three days, but the third day she came again, and brought in her mouth a precious Stone, and laid

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## Gesta Romanorum.

laid it in the Knights bosome. And when he had so done, he took her flight and flew from him again. The Knight marvelled at the Stone, and at the Bird, and forthwith he took the Stone in his hand, and touched his Givres and Fetters therewith, and presently they fell off. And then he arose and touched the doers of the Prison, and they opened, and he escaped, and ran fast to the Emperors Palace. When the Keeper of the Prison perceived this, he blew his Horn thrice, and raised up all the Folk of the City, and led them forth, crying with an high voice, Lo, the Thief is gone, follow we him all. And with that he ran befoze all his Fellows towards the Knight: And when he came nigh him, the Knight bent his Bow, and shot an Arrow, wherewith he smote the Keeper in the Lungs, and slew him, and then ran to the Palace, where he found succour against the Law.

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperoz betokeneth our Lord Iesus Christ, who ordained a Law, that what Innocent, that is, what person imprisoned wrongfully, might escape, and come to his Palace in his Heavenly Habitation through Repentance and true amendment of life, should find perpetual succour and help.

This

## The History of

This Knight betokeneth every one that is innocent, and accused by envy or malice unjustly, taking grief for his present estate.

The keeper of this Prison, betokeneth the Devil, that keepeth such a man hard bound by sin, and serveth him with riches and delights of this transitory world, that he should not escape from danger.

The Bird that singeth so sweetly betokeneth the voice of Heaven, that saith, to the oppressed, Turn again, now turn again, thou Prisoner, that is, turn again thou oppressed, and I will receive thee to Grace, for when Mankind was in thralldom to Satan in the Prison of Hell, then came there a Bird, that is, the Godhead, bearing with him a Stone, that betokens our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Holy Scripture, saying, I am a Stone.

The Soul of Christ descended with the Godhead, and brought with him all mankind out of the Prison of Hell, therefore if any of us be in the Prison of worldly oppression, touch we our sins with the Stone, that is, with the vertue of the Lord Jesus Christ, by acknowledging our sin in faithful prayer, and by true contrition, and then without doubt, the Chains of our oppression, with the Stone, shall be broken and fall from us, and the door of Heavenly Grace shall be opened, and we shall

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shall obtain help and succour in the Palace of the Heavenly Habitation.

And if the keeper of the Prison, that is the Devil (which is the blower of the Horn of pride, lechery, or covetousness,) stir in us any sins, then turn we towards him manfully, and shoot at him the Arrow of constant Faith, in Jesus Christ, by true and unfeigned Repentance, and without doubt he shall fly from us: and then by the grace of God, we may obtain the Palace of Heavenly bliss, where we shall behold the King of all glory. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The Argument.

A poor man exalted to dignity, is here admonished not to be unthankful, and to render evil for good, but even to the most simple ones to be grateful for any benefit, else surely God that gives thee this promotion, will make the brutish creatures of the earth thy enemies, and depose thee from thy dignity; and he that hath helped thee, be he never so base, may in the end have better favour with God and man than thy self, wherefore be warned of ingratitude by this example, and know thy self, thy God, and Friend.

### The 31. History.

**S**ometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperour, named Ebolides. It fortuned on a day, that this Emperour walked into a great Forrest to take his pleasure, where he met suddenly with a poor man, and so soon as the Emperour saw him, he was greatly moved with

## The History of

With mercy, and said, Good Friend, whence art thou? My Sovereign Lord, quoth he, I am your Subject born in your Land, and am now in great poverty. Then said the Emperour, if I knew that thou wert true in every thing, I would promote thee to great riches, therefore tell me what is thy Name?

My Lord, quoth he, I am called Lentulus, and I promise you to do you true service, and if I do otherwise, I submit my self to all manner of punishment that you can put me to: When the Emperour heard that, he promoted him incontinently to great riches, and shortly after he made him a Knight, and the Steward of his Land. And when he was thus exalted to honour, he waxed very proud, insomuch that he despised both his superiours, and inferiours: Not long after this Steward rode by a great Forrest, where he met with the Forrester, and charged him that he should make a hundred Pits in the ground and cover them over with green Grass and small Boughs, that if wild Beasts forned to go to the Forrest that way, they might fall in, and so being taken, be brought to the Emperour. The Forrester answered, and said, Sir, as you have said, it shall be done. Not long after it forned, that this Steward rode to the Forrest again to see if those Pits were made, and as he rode, he bethought himself how wealthy a man, and how

how mighty in power he was made, and how most men in the Empire obeyed him, and were at his command. As he rode thus thinking, he said to himself, There is no man greater than I, and with that he smote his Horse with his Spurs, and suddenly he fell into one of the deep Pits, that he himself had ordained before for the wild Beasts, and for the great deepness thereof he could not rise again by any manner of means, wherefore he languished in great perplexity: and straightway after him came a fierce Lion, and fell into the same Pit, and after the Lion an Ape, and after the Ape a Serpent. When the Steward was thus beset with these Beasts, he was exceedingly afraid.

Then at that time was dwelling in the City, a poor man named Guy, that had no riches save only an Ass, whereon daily he carried sticks and wood that fell from Trees, and such as he could get in the Forrest, and those he brought to the Market and sold them: and in this wise sustained himself and his wife as long as he might.

It fortun'd that this poor Guy went to the Forrest as he was wont, and as he came by the deep Pit, he heard a man cry, and say, O dear friend what art thou: for Gods sake help me, and I shall recompense thee so well that thou shalt ever after be the better: when

## The History of

this poore Guy heard that it was the voice of a man, he marvelled greatly, and stood still on the Pits brink, and said, Lo, good friend, I am come, why hast thou call'd me? Then said the Knight, Dear Friend, I am Steward of all the Emperors Land, and thus by fortune I am fallen into the Pit, and here be with me three Beasts, that is, a Lion, an Ape, and a horrible Serpent, which I fear most of all, and I wot not by which of them I shall be devoured: therefore I pray thee get a long Rope, wherewith thou maist draw me out of this deep Pit, and I will make thee rich for ever hereafter: for if I have not help the rather, I shall be devoured of these Wild Beasts.

Then said this poore Guy, I may full ill at this time intend to help thee, for I have nothing to live on, but that I gather Wood, and carry it to the Market to sell, wherewith I am sustained. Nevertheless, I will leaue my purposed labour, and fulfil thy will, and if thou reward me not, it will be a great hindrance to me, and to my poore Wife. Then the Steward made a great Oath, and said, I will promote thee and thine to great Wealth. Then said Guy, if you will perform your promise, I shall do what you command me. And with that he went again to the City, and bought there a long Rope, and came to the Pit

Gesta Romanorum.

Wit again, and said, Sir Steward, lo, here I let down a Rope to thee, bind thy self about the middle therewith, that I may pull thee up. Then was the Steward glad, and said, God friend let down the Rope: and with that he cast the end of the Rope down into the Pit. And when the Lyon saw it, he caught the Rope, and held fast, and Guy drew up the Lyon, wening in himself he had drawn up the Steward, and when he had so done, the Lyon thanked him in his manner and ran to the Wood. The second time that Guy let down the Rope, the Ape leapt to it, and caught it fast, and when he was drawn up, he thanked Guy in his manner, and ran to the Wood. The third time he let down the Rope, he drew up the Serpent, which thanked him and went to the Wood. Then the Steward cryed with a loud voice, O dear friend, now I am delivered of these three ravenous Beasts, let down the Rope to me, that I may come up. Then this poor Guy let down the Rope, and the Steward bound himself fast about the middle, and Guy drew him up. And when he was thus helpt out of the Pit, he said to Guy as followeth:

Come to me to morrow to the Palace, and then I will reward thee. Then poor Guy resposed thereat, and went home without Reward. Then his Wife demanded of him why he gather'd no wood whereby they might



## The History of

live that day. Then told he her of the event as it befel, how the Steward fell into the Pic (and also the Lion, the Ape and the Serpent) that he had made in the Forrest, and how he had holpen him out with a Kope, and saved him from being devoured of the three venomous Beasts : and that he should go to the Steward, and fetch his Reward on the morrow. When his Wife heard this, she rejoiced greatly, and said, if it shall be so, pray you rise to morrow at a due hour and go to the Palace, and receive your Reward, that we may be comforted thereby.

So in the morning Guy arose, and went to the Palace and knocked at the Gate : then came the Porter, and asked the cause of his knocking : I pray thee quoth this Guy, go to the Steward, and say to him, that here abideth a poor man at the Gate, that spake with him yesterday in the Forrest. The Porter went and told the Steward as the poor man had said : Then said the Steward, go you again, and tell him, that he lyeth, for yesterday spake I with no man in the Forrest, and charge him that he go away and trouble me no more. The Porter went forth, and told poor Guy what the Steward had said, and charged him to go away. Then was this poor Guy sorrowful, and went home, and he told his Wife how the Steward answered him. His Wife comfort-



ed him in all the might, and said, go you again and probe him thrice.

Then on the morrow this Guy arose, and went to the Palace again, praying the Porter to do his errand once again to the Steward. The Porter answered and said, gladly would I do thy errand, but I fear me soze it will be to thy hurt. Then went he in and told the Steward, that this poore man was again returned: when the Steward heard that, he went out, and all to beat poore Guy, and left him in peril of death.

When his Wife heard this, she came with her Ass, and led him home as she might, and all that she had she spent upon Surgeons, and Physicians to help him: and when he was perfectly whole, he went to the Forrest as he was wont, for to gather sticks and small wood for his living. And as he went in the Forrest, he saw a Lion driving befoze him ten Asses that were laden with rich Jewels and Merchandize. This Lion drove forth the Asses befoze Guy, which feared him soze, lest he should have devoured him, nevertheless when he beheld the Lion better, he knew well that it was the same Lion that he drew out of the Pit. This Lion left not Guy till all the Asses with the Merchandize were entred into his yard, and then the Lion did him obeysance, and ran to the Wood.

## The History of

When Guy searched the Fardels, and found great riches therein, wherefore he made proclamation in divers Churches, if any man had lost such goods he should have them again, but there was none that challenged them. And when Guy saw this, he sold the goods, and bought therewith House and Land, and so was made rich. Nevertheless he went to the Forrest, as he did before. And as he was in the Forrest gathering wood, he espyed the Ape on the top of a Tree breaking Boughs buskily with her teeth and claws, and throwing them down, so that in short time Guy had loaded his Ass: And when he had so done, she went her way and Guy went home.

Now Guy on the morrow went to the Forrest again, and as he sate binding his Faggots, he saw the Serpent that he drew out of the Pit come towards him, bearing in her mouth a precious stone of three colours, which she let fall at Guy's feet, and when she had thus done, she kissed his feet and went her way. Then Guy took up the Stone, and marvelled greatly at what vertue it might be, wherefore he rose up, and went to a Jeweller named Peter, and said, Dear Brother, I pray thee tell me the vertue of this precious stone, and I shall reward thee for thy labour. When this Jeweller had well beheld, and understood the nature of the Stone, he said, good friend, if thou list to sell

tell the Stone, I shall give thee an hundred Marks for it. Then said Guy, I will not sell the Stone, till thou tell me truly the vertues thereof. Then said the Jeweller, without doubt this Stone hath three vertues: the first vertue is, that whosoever beareth this Stone about him, shall have joy without sorrow: the second vertue is, that he shall have plenty without want: the third vertue is, that he shall have light without darknels: and it hath also another vertue, that no man may sell it, but for as much as it is worth, and if he do the contrary, the Stone returneth again to the first owner. When Guy heard this, he was right joyful, and said to himself, in a good hour I drew these beasts out of the Pit.

Not long after it befel, that this Guy was made passing rich, and bought great possessions and livings, wherefore within a while he was made a Knight.

It was not long after, but the Emperour had knowledge how Sir Guy had a Stone of such vertue, wherefore he sent for Sir Guy, commanding him to come in all haste, and so he did. And when Sir Guy was come to the Emperour, and he said unto him: my friend, I have heard say that sometimes thou wert in great poverty, and now thou art made rich by the vertue of a little Stone, therefore I pray thee that thou sell me that Stone. Sir Guy answered

## The History of

answered and said, that may I not do, for so long as I have that stone, I am sure of three things, that is of joy without sorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkness.

When the Emperour heard this, he had a greater desire to buy the Stone than he had before, and said to him, Sir Guy, of two things thou must chuse one, that is, whether thou wilt forsake this Empire, and all thy kindred, or else sell me the Stone. Then said Sir Guy, My Lord, if it must needs be thus, be it at your will. Nevertheless I shall tell you the property of this stone, if you pay not for it as it is worth, without doubt it will come to me again. Then the Emperour said, surely I will give sufficient, for thou shalt receive of me therefore a thousand pound, and so it was done. Sir Guy received the money, and went home.

On the morrow early he opened his Coffer, and found the Stone, and then he told to the Lady his Wife, how he had found in his Coffer the Stone which he had sold to the Emperour. Then said his Wife, good Sir, haste you unto the Emperour again, and give him the Stone, lest he be displeased, and through malice repute some deceit in us.

Then went Sir Guy again to the Emperour, and said to him, My Lord, yesterday I sold you a Stone, which if it please you, I would  
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fain see. The Emperoz went for his Stone to the Treasury, but found it not, wherefore he was right sorrowful, and came again, and told Sir Guy how it was lost: Then said Sir Guy, My Lord, grieve you not, for I told you yester day, that I might not sell it, except I had the value thereof, and yester day I received a thousand pound of you therefore, and this day I found it in my Coffer again, and therefore if I had not brought the Stone again, peradventure you would have told me your heaviness by countenance, and with that he shewed forth the Stone, whereat the Emperoz marvelled greatly, and said, Sir Guy, by the faith that thou owest to me, tell me how thou camest by this Stone.

Then said Sir Guy, by the faith that I owe to you, I shall tell you the very truth, as touching the Stone.

Your Steward that is so promoted up of nought, caused many deep Pits to be made in your Forrest, and it fortuned that he not long after fell into one of them himself, and through the deepness thereof could not rise again. It chanced also the same day, that a Lion, an Ape, and a Serpent fell into the Pit with him, at which time I was a very poor man, and took great pains for my living, and as I walked into the Forrest with mine Axe to gather wood, he cryed to me to help him out of the Pit, and  
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## The History of

save him from death, for there were in the Pit with him three venomous beasts, that is, a Lion, an Ape, and a foul Serpent; and then he promised me by his word, to promote me and all my kindred to great riches: which when I heard, I was right glad, and let down a Rope unto him, supposing to have drawn him up, and haled up a Lion, and after that an Ape, and after a Serpent, and at the last your Steward.

The Lion gave me ten Ases laden with Merchandize; the Ape gave me as much wood as mine Ass would bear, and the Serpent gave me this Stone that I have told you; but your Steward beat me, and wounded me so sore for my good will, that I was born home upon mine Ass.

When the Emperour heard this, his heart was moved greatly against the Steward, wherefore he examin'd him of that false deed: but he was dumb, and would not speak, for so much that he could not deny his ingratitude.

Then said the Emperour, O thou wretched creature; unreasonable Beasts, as the Lion, the Ape, and the Serpent, rewarded him for his good deed, and thou that art a reasonable man hast almost beaten him to death that saved thee, and took thee out of the Pit, therefore for thy falsehood and wickedness, I judge thee to be hanged  
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this day on the Gallows, and all thy goods and lands I grant to Sir Guy, and also I ordain that Sir Guy shall occupy thy place, and be my Steward: and so it was done.

When Sir Guy was thus rewarded by the Emperoz and made Steward, he was well beloved of every man as long as he lived, and at the last he ended his life with honour in peace.

The Moral.

This Emperoz betokeneth the Father of Heaven, the poor man betokeneth every man that cometh into this World, and at last is promoted to great riches and worldly honour, as the Psalmist saith, God lifteth up the poor man out of the mire. But many such men neither know God nor themselves, but cause deep Pits to be made, that is, unkindness and malice, they ordain against simple men, into the which Pit the Devil oft causeth them to fall, according to the Text in Ecclesiasticus, who maketh a pit for another man, himself falleth therein: Which Text was proved by Hamon, who caused a Gallows to be set up for Mordicheus, but was hanged thereon himself.

This Guy that went daily to the Forrest with his Als to gather Wood, betokens every just and godly man, fearing God in the Forrest of this World: his Wood that he gathereth, betokeneth his Faith and good Works, which he carrieth

## The History of

carrieth upon his Ales humane endeavour, whereby his soul may have joy, and live in the Tabernacle of Heaven; and as the Steward, the Lion, the Ape and the Serpent fell into the Pit, right so a sinful man falleth into the Pit of sin: But the Lion of the Tribe of Juda (that is Jesus Christ) descended with him as oftentimes as the sinner hath will to come to Grace. Therefore saith the Psalmist I am with him in Tribulation.

This Guy draweth up the Lion, that is, mans soul out of the Pit, by the Cord of vertue he drew up the Ape also, that is, contrary will to reason, that he may obey to reason: for of all manner of Beasts, the Ape is most like to man; like as amongst all the strength of the soul, discretion ought to be linked with reason, and to obey reason. He drew up also a Serpent, by which is to be understood repentance, for two causes: for as the Serpent beareth in his mouth venom, and in his tail a medicine: right so repentance beareth at the beginning bitterness to the doer, yet it is sweet and medicinable unto the soul at the end, and therefore every just man should draw to him the Serpent of repentance. Then at the last he drew up the Steward from the Pit of sin, according unto Christs saying, I am come not only to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance. Also it is written, that Seneca

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## Gesta Romanorum.

the Philosopher taught the Emperoz many Lawes and Vertues of truth, and at last as the Steward did, he sought the death of Seneca. Also Christ gave power to Judas to work miracles, as he did to the other Disciples, yet betrayed him at last: Right so, now a days many Children of Belial delight more to do harm than good, especially to them that would instruct them perfectly both for Soul and Body.

The Lion gave to the just and godly poore man ten Asses laden with Merchandize: that is, our Lord Iesus Christ gives unto every righteous man ten Commandments charged with Vertues, by which he groweth to the riches of Heaven.

The Ape also gathereth him Wood, as oft as the just man worketh the works of Faith: for Wood necessarily is profitable for two uses, that is, to make a fire, to build houses; even so Charity rejoiceth God and Angels in Heaven according to Scripture, More joy is among Angels for one sinner that repenteth, &c. Charity also raiseth the House of Heaven against the coming of the Soul.

The Serpent also gave him a stone of three divers colours, which betokeneth our Lord Iesus Christ, whom we seek by repentance. Wherefore saith St. Jerome, in his second Table thus, We should repent us after our shipwrack.

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## The History of

That Christ is the Stone, may be proved by himself, saying, I am a living Stone; Christ hath three colours, which betokeneth the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the humility of the Holy Ghost: Therefore who so may get this precious Stone, shall have the Empire of Heaven, joy without sorrow, plenty without want, and light without darkness. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

## The Argument.

By the Nativity of Christ proceedeth joyful gladness to the World, and Salvation unto mankind; yet is man unthankful unto God, contrary to his promise made in Baptism. We are warned in all worldly tempests continually to cleave to Christ by Faith and Hope, to continue well doing, and to withstand the malice of the Devil: The Preachers of Gods Word, are sent of God to confound the Devil by sound Doctrine and good life. Life and death is set before men: we ought then to chuse that life, that may be for our everlasting comfort.

## The 32. History.

Sometime dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperor, named Anselm, who had married the Kings Daughter of Jerusalem, a fair Lady and gracious in the sight of every man, but she was long time with the Emperor, ere she bare him any Child; wherefore the Nobles of the Empire were very sorrowful, because their Lord had no Heir of his own body begotten:

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Till at last it befel, that this Anselm walked after supper, in an evening, into his Garden, and bethought himself that he had no Heir, and how the King of Ampluy warred on him continually, for so much as he had no Son to make defence in his absence; therefore he was sorrowful, and went to his Chamber and slept. Then he thought he saw a Vision in his sleep, that the morning was more clear than it was wont to be, and that the Moon was much paler on the one side than on the other. And after he saw a Bird of two colours, and by that Bird stood two Beasts, which fed that little Bird with their heat. And after that came more Beasts, and bowing their breasts toward the Bird, went their way: Then came there divers Birds that sung sweetly and pleasantly, with that the Emperor awaked.

In the morning early this Anselm remembered his vision, and wondered much what it might signifie; wherefore he called to him his Philosophers: and all the States of the Empire and told them his Dream; charging them to tell him the signification thereof, on pain of death, and if they told him the true interpretation thereof, he promis'd them good reward. Then said they, Dear Lord, tell us your Dream, and we shall declare to you what it be-tokens. Then the Emperor told them from the beginning to the ending, as is afore-said.

## The History of

said. When the Philosophers heard this, with glad chear they answered and said, Sir, the Vision that you saw betokeneth good, for the Empire shall be clearer than it is.

The man that is more pale on the one side than on the other, betokeneth the Emperess, that hath lost part of her colour, through the conception of a Son that she hath conceived. The little Bird betokeneth the Son that she shall bear. The two Beasts that fed this Bird betoken the wise and rich men of the Empire which shall obey the Son. These other Beasts that bowed their Breasts to the Bird betoken many other Nations that shall do him Homage. The Bird that sang so sweetly to this little Bird, betokeneth the Romans, who shall reioice and sing because of his birth. This is the very interpretation of your Dream.

When the Emperoz heard this, he was right ioyful. Soon after that the Emperess travelled in Child-birth, and was delivered of a fair Son, at whose birth there was great and wonderful ioy made.

When the King of Amplay heard this, he thought in himself thus: Lo, I have warred against the Emperoz all the days of my life, and now he hath a Son, who when he cometh to full age, will revenge the wrong I have done against his Father, therefore it is better that I send to the Emperoz, and beseech him of

truce



truce and peace, that the Son may have nothing against me, when he cometh to manhood: When he had thus said to himself, he wrote to the Emperoz, beseeching him to have peace. When the Emperoz saw that the King of Amphy wrote to him more for fear than for love, he wrote again to him, that if he would find good and sufficient sureties to keep the peace, and bind himself all the days of his life to do him service and homage, he would receive him to peace.

When the King had read the tenor of the Emperors Letter, he call'd his counsel praying them to give him Counsel how he might best do, as touching this matter. Then said they, It is good that ye obey the Emperors will and commandment in all things. For first, in that he desired of you surety for the Peace; to this we answer thus, We have but one Daughter, and the Emperoz one Son, wherefore let a marriage be made between them, and that may be a perpetual Covenant of Peace. Also he asketh Homage and Tribute, which it is good to fulfil. Then the King sent his Messengers to the Emperoz, saying, that he would fulfil his desire in all things, if it might please his Highness, that his Son and the Kings Daughter might be married together. All this well pleased the Emperoz, yet he sent again, saying, If his Daughter were

## The History of

a clean Virgin from her birth unto that day he would consent to that marriage. Then was the King right glad, for his Daughter was a clean Virgin.

Wherefore when the Letters of Covenant and compact were sealed, the King furnished a fair Ship, wherein he might send his Daughter with many Noble Knights, Ladies, and great Riches unto the Emperoz, for to have his Son in marriage.

And when they were sailing in the Sea, towards Rome, a storm arose so extreemly and so horribly, that the Ship brake against a Rock, and they were all drowned, save only the young Lady which fixed her hope and heart so greatly on God, that she was saved, and about three of the clock the Tempest ceased, and the Lady drowe forth over the Waves in that broken Ship which was cast up again: but a huge Whale followed after, ready to devour both the Ship and her. Wherefore this young Lady when night came, smote fire with a stone wherewith the Ship was greatly lightened, and then the Whale durst not adventure toward the Ship for fear of that light. At the Cock crowing, this young Lady was so weary of the great Tempest and trouble of Sea, that she slept, and within a little while after the fire ceased, and the Whale came and devoured the Virgin. And when she awaked and found

her

her self swallowed up in the Whales belly, she smote fire, and with a knife wounded the Whale in many places, and when the Whale felt himself wounded, according to his nature he began to swim to Land.

There was dwelling at that time in a Country near by, a noble Earl named Pirris, who for his recreation walking on the Sea shore, saw the Whale coming towards the Land, wherefore he turned home again, and gathered a great many of men and women, and came thither again, and fought with the Whale, and wounded him very sore, and as they smote, the Maiden that was in his Belly cryed with an high voice, and said, O gentle friends, have mercy and compassion on me, for I am a Kings Daughter, and a true Virgin from the hour of my Birth unto this day. When the Earl heard this, he wondered greatly, and opened the side of the Whale, and found the young Lady, and took her out: And when she was thus delivered, she told him forthwith whose Daughter she was, and how she had lost all her Goods in the Sea, and how she should have been married unto the Emperors Son. And when the Earl heard this, he was very glad, and comforted her the more, and kept her with him till she was well refreshed. And in the mean time he sent Messengers to the Emperoz, letting him

## The History of

to know how the Kings Daughter was saved.

Then was the Emperoz right glad of her safety and coming, and had great compassion on her, saying, Ah good Maiden, for the love of my Son thou hast suffered much woe: nevertheless, if thou be worthy to be his Wife, soon shall I prove. And when he had thus said, he caused three Vessels to be brought forth: the first was made of pure Gold, well beset with precious stones without, and within full of dead mens bones, and thereupon was engraven this Verse: Whoso chuseth me, shall find that he deserveth. The second Vessel was made of fine silver, fill'd with earth and worms, the Superscription was thus, Whoso chuseth me, shall find that his nature desireth. The third Vessel was made of Lead, full within of precious stones, and thereupon was insculpt this Verse, Whoso chuseth me, shall find that God hath disposed for him. These three Vessels the Emperoz shewed the Maiden, and said; Lo, here Daughter, these be rich Vessels, if thou chuse one of these, wherein is profit to thee and to others, then shalt thou have my Son. And if thou chuse that wherein is no profit to thee, nor to any other, soothly thou shalt not marry him.

When the Maiden heard this, she lift up her hands to God, and said, Thou Lord, that knowest all things, grant me grace this hour  
so

sa to chuse, that I may receive the Emperors  
 Son. And with that she beheld the first vessel  
 of Gold, which was engraven royally, and read  
 the Superscription: Whoso chuseth me, shall  
 find that he deserveth, saying thus, though this  
 Vessel be full precious, and made of pure Gold,  
 nevertheless I know not what is within,  
 therefore my dear Lord, this Vessel will I not  
 chuse.

And then she beheld the second Vessel, that  
 was of pure Silver, and read the Superscripti-  
 on, Whoso chuseth me, shall find that his nature  
 desireth: Thinking thus within her self, if I  
 chuse this Vessel, what is within I know not,  
 but well I know, there shall I find that na-  
 ture desireth, and my nature desireth the lust  
 of the flesh, and therefore this Vessel will I  
 not chuse.

When she had seen these two Vessels, and  
 had given an answer as touching them, she  
 beheld the third Vessel of Lead, and read the  
 superscription, Whoso chuseth me, shall find that  
 God hath disposed: Thinking within her self,  
 this vessel is not very rich, nor outwardly pre-  
 cious, yet the superscription saith, Whoso chu-  
 seth me, shall find that God hath disposed: and  
 without doubt God never disposeth any harm,  
 therefore by the leave of God this Vessel will I  
 chuse.

When the Emperour heard this, he said, ¶

## The History of

fair Maiden open thy vessel, for it is full of precious stones, and see if thou hast well chosen or no. And when this young Lady had opened it, she found it full of fine Gold and precious stones, as the Emperour had told her before. Then said the Emperour, Daughter, because thou hast well chosen, thou shalt marry my Son. And then he appointed the wedding day; and they were married with great solemnity, and with much honour continu'd to their lives end.

### The Moral.

This Emperour betokens the Father of Heaven, who was long time without a natural Son, therefore many men were in danger of perishing in Hell. The Emperess conceived when the Angel Gabriel said, Lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a Child. And then the Firmament began to clear when this little Child lightened the World with his birth. The Moon began to wax pale when the face of the Virgin Mary was over-shadowed by vertue of the Holy God, and not only her face was thus shadowed, but also her body, for she was conceived with Child as another Woman, wherefore Joseph would have forsaken her privily and gone away. This little Bird that came from the one side of the Moon betokens our Lord Jesus Christ, who at midnight was born of the Virgin Mary, wrapped  
in



in cloaths and laid it in an Ox Stall. The two Beasts betoken the Ox and the Ass that Joseph brought with him, which honours him in his birth. These other Beasts that came from far, betoken the Shepherds in the field, to whom the Angel said thus, Lo, I shew you great joy. The Birds that sung so sweetly, betoken the Angels in Heaven, which sung at his birth this joyful Song, Glory be to God above, and peace to men on earth.

The King of Ampluy, which held war against the Emperoz, betokens all mankind, that were contrary to God, as they were in the Devils power. But immediately, when our Lord Jesus Christ was born, he bowed himself to God, and besought him of peace, when he received his Baptism; for at our Baptism we promised to draw only to God, and forsake the Devil and all his pomp. The King gave his Daughter in marriage to the Emperors Son, right so every one of us ought to give his Soul in marriage to Gods Son, for he is always ready to receive our Soul as his Spouse; according to the Scripture, saying thus, I will marry thee to me. But ere our Soul may come to the Palace of Heaven, she must sail by the Sea of the World in the Ship of good life: but oftentimes there ariseth a Tempest in the Sea, that is, trouble of this World, the temptations of the flesh, and the

## The History of

suggestion of the Devil ariseth suddenly, and drowneth the vertues that the Soul receiued in Baptism: neuertheles yet falleth he not out of the Ship of charity, but keepeþ her self surely therein by faith and hope. For as the Apostle saith, By hope we be saved. For it is impossible to be saved without hope or faith. The great Whale that followed the Maiden betokens the Devil, which by night and by day, lieth in wait to overcome the Soul by sin: therefore do we as the Maiden did, smite the fire of charity and love out of the Stone, that is Christ, according to this saying, I am a stone, and certainly the Devil shall have no power over us: Many men begin well, as did the Maid, but at last they be weary of their good works, and so they sleepe in sin: And anon when the Devil perceiveth this, he deboureth the sinner in his evil thoughts, delights, consent and works. Therefore if any of us feel our selves in such wise under the power of the Devil, let him do as the Maid did, smite the Devil with the Knife of bitter repentance, then kindle the fire of Charity, and without doubt he shall cast thee on the Land of good life.

The Earl that came with his Seruants to slay the Whale, betokens a discret Preacher dwelling beside the Sea, that is, not drawn to worldly delectation, but ever ready with  
good

## Gesta Romanorum.

good words of Holy Scripture to kill the Devil, and to destroy his power. We must all cry with an high voice as the Maiden did, acknowledging our sins, and then shall we be delivered from the Devil, and nourished with vertuous exercise.

The Emperour sheweth this Maiden threë Vessels, that is, God putteth befoze man, life and death, good and evil, and which of these he chosen he shall obtain. Therefore saith Solomon, death and life is set before man, chuse which him list. And yet man is uncertain whether he shall chuse life or death.

By the first Vessel of Gold, full of dead mens bones, is understood mighty worldly rich men who shine like Gold outwardly in Riches and pomp of the world, nevertheless within they be full of dead mens bones, that is, the works they have done in this world be dead in the sight of God through deadly sin. Therefore if any man chuse such a life, he shall have that he deserveth, that is, such men be like unto Tombs, that be white and royally painted and arrayed without, and covered with cloath of Gold and Silk and within there is nothing but dry bones.

By the second Vessel of Silver, we ought to understand some Justices and wise men of this World, who shine in fair speech, but within they be full of worms and earth, that  
is,

## The History of

is, their fair speech shall avail them no more at the day of Judgment, than the Worms of the Earth, and peradventure less, for then shall they suffer everlasting pain, if they dye in deadly sin.

By the third Vessel of Lead, full of Gold and precious Stones we are to understand a simple and poor life, which the chosen Souls chuse, that they may be married to our blessed Lord Iesus Christ by humility and obedience; and such men bear with them precious Stones, that is, Faith, and her fruitful works pleasing to God: by which at the Judgment day, they be espoused to our Lord Iesus Christ, and obtain the Heritage of Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Saviour Iesus Christ that died on the Cross. Amen.

## The Argument.

Man by Baptism promised to live in the fear of God, and forsake the Devil. Christ sorroweth for our sins, he requireth dutiful service of us in six several ages, but we are always unready for him, yet the mercy of God is favourable towards us, that he spareth even till the last age of man, vouchsafing if then we repent us, and call for Grace, believing in his Mercies, to receive us into the Throne of his Heavenly Grace,

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## The 33. History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperoz named Calapodus, who took a fair Lady to his Wife. They were not long together before that this Emperess conceived, and bare him a Son, a goodly Child and a fair. When he was of age, he was set to School; and when he came to twenty years of age, he desired his Fathers Heritage, saying, Dear Father, you are an old man and may not govern your Empire, therefore if it please you to give it me, it shall be to your ease. Then answered the Emperoz and said, Dear Son I dread me sore, that when the Empire is in thy power, thou wilt not fulfil my will or my desire.

Then answered the Emperess (for so much as she loved her Son better than her Husband) and said, My Lord, that cannot be, for thou hast but one Son, therefore I believe he will fulfil thine intent in all things: This Empire may help him well, and therefore it is best to grant him the Empire. Then answered the Emperoz and said, I will first have of him a letter Obligatory, that whensoever he doth any thing against my will, that then I will depose him from the Empire, without any contradiction.

The Son granted this, and did make the Obligation, and sealed it. And when this was

## The History of

was done this young Emperoz waxed so proud, that he feared neither God nor man, and did very much harm. But his Father suffered it patiently, for he would be corrected by no man.

Now at last there fell a great dearth in the Empire, so that many men dyed for want of food: This old Emperoz was all alone himself, and began to have need, wherefore he went to his Son to have some maintenance, which his Son granted and suffered for a time. But within short time his Father began to wax sick; wherefore he called his Son, and pray'd him to give him a draught of his Must. His Son answered and said, That will I not do, for my Must is not good for your complexion. Then said the Emperoz, I pray thee give me a draught of thy Wine. His Son answered and said, That he should have none, for my Wine is not yet fined, and if I touch it, it will trouble, and therefore I will not broach it, till it be cleared and fined. Then said his Father, Give me some of the third Tun. That will I not do (quoth he) for that Wine is not good for a sick man. Then his Father pray'd him heartily for a draught of the fourth Tun. Then answered he and said, Therefore get ye none for it is feeble and without any sustentation: and such Wine is not good for you, for it is not comfortable. Then said his Father, now good



## Gesta Romanorum.

god Son give me of the fifth Tun. That will I not, quoth he, for that Tun is full of lees and dregs, and such as is not fit for men, nor scarcely for hogs.

When his Father saw he might get nothing of him, after he was perfectly well, he went to the King of Jerusalem, and made his complaint of his Son, and shewed him the Letter Obligatory, which his Son had made, whereby his Father might put him out of his Empire without any gainsaying. When the King heard this, he called the Emperors Son to answer his Father: And when he came, he could not answer to his Father with any reason, wherefoze the King put him out of his Empire, and seated his Father therein again: and so he continued all the days of his life.

### The Moral.

This Emperoz betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, according to that saying, Is not he thy Father that hath brought thee up? he hath made thee, &c. Deut. 32. 6. The Son betokeneth man, to whom he gave all the Empire of this World, according to Scripture: Heaven he hath given to our Lord, and Earth to Man. Mankind made an Obligation with our Lord Jesus Christ, when he received the Sacrament of Baptism, wherein he promised to serve him truly, and forsake  
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## The History of

the Devil and all his pomp and vain glory. This Emperoz began to wax sick on a day, that is, our Lord Iesus Christ is troubled as oft as a Christian sinneth and breaks his Commandments, wherefore he thirsts greatly for the help of our Soules, and he asked a draught of the first Tun, that is, he asketh of man the first age of his Childhood to be spent in his service, but incontinently the wicked Child answereth and saith, I may not do so, for my Childhood is Dust, that is, it is tender and so young, that it may not attempt so soon to serve God; which is manifestly against the truth, for the Child of one day is not without sin. For S. Gregory in his Dialogues saith, The Children of five years of age drive out Spirits from the bosomes of their Fathers. Then when God seeth that he cannot have of the Dust of his Childhood, then he desireth Wine of the second Tun. Then answereth the wicked youth, and saith, that his Wine is not apt to serve God. And when God may not have the second Tun, then asketh he of the third Tun, that is, of the third Tun of his youth. Then answereth the wicked young man, and saith, The Wine is very strong and mighty, and therefore his youth ought to be spent about manly deeds in this World, and not in good life, which would make him feeble and weak. When God seeth that he may  
not

## Gesta Romanorum.

not have of this Tun. Then asked he of the fourth Tun. And then answered the wicked man in his manhood, and saith that aged men are feeble, and may not fast nor do any hard Repentance, and if he did, he should be the cause of his own death. Then asked our Lord of the fifth Tun, that is, of his old age, when he stoops and may not go without a staff. But the wicked old man excuseth himself, and saith, that Wine is too feeble to give to such a feeble man, for if he should fast one day, it were time to morrow to make his Grave. And when our Lord seeth that he may not have of the fifth Tun, then asketh he of the sixth Tun; that so when a man is blind and may go to sin no more, yet desireth he of such a man drink, that is, help of his Soul: But the wretched man lying in despair, saith, Alas, alas, wo to me, because I served not almighty God my Maker, and Redeemer here in times past, while I was in youth and in prosperity: now there is nothing left, but only the lees and dregs of wretchedness, therefore what shall it avail me now to turn toward God: but for such men we should lament. Nevertheless God is merciful, that though he might have no service of man in all his time, yet he is content to have the lees of his Tun, that is, the good will, though he doth not serve him otherwise, and so shall his good will

## The History of

will stand him in stead of godly Life. For in what hour the sinner doth repent him of his sin, from the bottom of his heart, he shall be forgiven, as Ezekiel witnesseth. But there be many that will give no Wine, nor no other thing to him, wherefore Christ shall complain to the King of Jerusalem, that is, to the God-head, at the judgment day, and then as he is God and man, shall he give sentence definitive against such men, saying, I have hungred, and ye gave me no meat, I have been naked, and ye cloathed me not: I have thirsted and ye gave me no drink. Lo, thus shall he rehearse to thee the fruits of thy Faith. And when this is done, then shall such men be put to everlasting pain, and the just man into everlasting bliss. Unto the which bring us, our Lord Iesus Christ, Amen.

## The Argument.

Man being captivated by Satan, the world refuseth to do for him, till the God-head of the Heavenly Father, bearing an earnest affection unto him, did espouse him, and embrace him within the bosome of inward and entire love, adventuring what he might to set all mankind at liberty, yet grudgeth the World that we should always serve our God, and forsake her: but to eschew all such malignity we are taught in this History.

## The 34. History.

**I**n Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Emperoz, named Anthony, under whose reign

reign—the Robbers of the Sea had taken Prisoner a mighty mans Son of another Region, and brought him to the Emperors Prison being bound. When this young man was thus in Prison, he incontinent wrote to his Father for his Ransom, but he would neither pay his Ransom, nor send him any thing for to comfort him: This when he heard, he wept sore and would not be comforted for the unkindness of his Father.

This Emperoz had a fair Daughter which visited every day the Prisoner, and comforted him as much as she might, wishing him to be merry. To whom the Prisoner answered and said, How shall I be merry: or how may I joy, thus to lie fast bound in Prison from the sight of man: and notwithstanding this, it grieveth me most that my Father will not pay my Ransom.

When the Maiden heard this, she was moved with pity, and said, Dear Friend, I am sorry for thee, and therefore if thou wilt grant me one thing, I shall deliver thee from thy anguish and pain. What thing is that, quoth he): What thou wilt take me for thy Wife; then said the Prisoner, I promise you surely to fulfil your request and desire, and for the more assurance I plight you my troth. When he had so done, shortly after the Damsel delivered him out of Prison,

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## The History of

and fled away with him home to his Fathers House.

When his Father saw his Son and the Maiden together, he asked the cause why he brought the Maiden with him ; then said his Son : Sir this Damsel delivered me out of Prison, and therefore she shall be my Wife. Then said his Father, I will not consent that she shall be thy Wife, for two reasonable causes, which I shall forthwith shew thee.

The first is this, it is not unknown to thee, that the Emperour her Father might have had for thy deliverance great plenty of riches ; and forasmuch as she was untrue to her own Father and true to thee, it seemeth well that thou shouldst not trust long to her : for being false to her own Father, it is to be feared she will not be true to another man.

The second reason is this : the cause why she delivered thee out of Prison, was neither for pity nor for love, but for carnal lust that she had to thee. For at thy deliverance she made Covenant with thee to be thy Wife, and had of thee thy troth, and hath accompanied with thee : therefore Son (saith he) it is no reason that she should be thy Wife.

The Maiden answered to these Objections, and said, As for the first reason that thou layest against me, that I should be untrue to my Father, that is false, for my Father hath plenty



plenty of riches, and thy Son is but poore, and therefore I helpt him for pity, and for none other cause, and nevertheless, thou that art his Father would not pay his ransom, that he might be delivered out of Prison. No, for this cause I have delivered him, therefore I am kinder to him, than thou that art his own Father, and he is more beholding to me, than to thee.

Unto the other reason: Whereas thou sayest, that I delivered him because of carnal lust: I answer, and say plainly, that it is not truth, for all manner of carnal love is caused of strength and beauty, but thy Son is neither strong nor beautiful, for his imprisonment hath taken away his strength and beauty, for by the pain he hath had in prison, he is brought low, and made un lusty to sport, and therefore pity only moved me to deliver him, and not carnal lust.

Then said the Son, Dear Father, for as much as I was in peril of death, and wrote unto you to pay my Ransom, that I might be delivered, and you would not help me, but this gentle Damsel for pity hath saved me from death and delivered me out of Prison, therefore surely she shall be my Wife. So forthwith he married her with great honour, and with her ended his life.

## The History of

### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperoz betokeneth the the Father of Heaven : The young man which was taken with the Pirats of the Sea, betokens all mankind, which was taken with the Devil, by the sin of our sozefather Adam, and was cast into the Prison of Hell with great sozrow and pain. His Father would not ransom him ; that is, the World would do nothing for him

This fair Daughter betokeneth the Godhead, which came down from Heaven, and took manhood of the Virgin Mary, and so made a Ghostly marriage between him and Man : and upon this condition he delivered mankind out of the Prison of Hell, when he came from Heaven and forsook the fellowship of Angels, for to dwell with us in this wretched vale of tears. But the Father, that betokeneth the World, grudgeth ever against him, and would not suffer that the Soul of man should become the Sponse of Jesus Christ, but that she should alway serve him, and should forsake our Lord. Therefore if we follow the World and its vanities, certainly we shall fall into the snare of the Devil. From the which defend us our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Gesta Romanorum.

### The Argument.

It is the Ordinance of God, that no man shall labour for worldly promotion by covetousness and falshood nor by deceit or other evil courses. Man for his first transgression should have been adjudged to perpetual torment in Hell, had not the Son of God voluntarily offered himself to the death to save mankind, and destroy Satan his Enemy, so that thereby he might live with him in the habitation of Heaven everlastingly.

### The 35. History.

**S**ometime in Rome there dwelt a noble Emperour of great livelihood named Alexander, which above all vertues loved the vertue of bounty; wherefore he ordained a Law for great charity, That no man under pain of death should turn a Plaice in his Dish at his meat, but only eat the white side, and not the black; and if any man would attempt to do the contrary, he should suffer death without any pardon: but yet ere he dyed, he should ask three Petitions of the Emperour what him list (except his life) which should be granted him.

It befel after upon a day, that there came an Earl and his Son, of a strange Country, to speak with the Emperour; and when the Earl was set at meat, he was served with a Plaice, and he which was an hungry and had an appetite to his meat, after he had eaten the white side, he turned the black side, and began to eat

## The History of

thereof : wherefore straightway he was accused to the Emperoz, because he had offended against the Law. Then said the Emperoz, Let him dye according to the Law without any delay.

When the Carls Son heard that his Father should die, immediately he fell down on both his knees before the Emperoz, and said, O my reverend Lord, I most humbly entreat you, that I may dye for my Father. Then said the Emperoz, it pleaseth me well so that one dye for the offence. Then said the Carls Son, sith it is so that I must dye, I ask the benefit of the Law, that is, that I may have three petitions granted ere I dye. The Emperoz answered and said, Ask what thou wilt, there shall no man say thee nay.

Then said this young Knight, My Lord, you have but one Daughter, the which I desire of your Highness, that she may lie one night with me before I dye. The Emperoz granted for fulfilling of the Law, though it were against his will. Nevertheless this Knight desfloured her not at that night : therefore he greatly pleased the Emperoz.

The second Petition is this, I ask all thy treasure ; and immediately the Emperoz granted, because he would not be called a breaker of the Law. And when the Carls Son had received the Emperozs treasure, he imparted it

it both to poore and to rich, by means whereof  
he obtained their good wills,

My third Petition is this, I ask my Lord,  
that all their eyes may be put out incontinent  
that saw my Father eat the black side of the  
Plaice. And they that saw him turn the Plaice,  
bethought them and said within themselves :  
if we acknowledge that we saw him do this  
trespass, then shall our eyes be put out : and  
therefore it is better that we hold us still ;  
And so there was none found that would accuse  
him.

When the Carls Son heard this, he said  
to the Emperoz, My Lord (quoth he) ye see  
there is no man accuseth my Father, there-  
fore give me rightfull Judgment. Then said  
the Emperoz, Forasmuch as no man will ac-  
knowledge that they saw him turn the Plaice,  
therefore I will not that thy Father shall die.  
So thus the Son saved his Fathers life, and  
after the decease of the Emperoz married his  
Daughter.

#### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz betokeneth the  
Father of Heaven, which ordained a Law,  
that no man should turn the black side of a  
Plaice, that is, there should no man labour  
for riches and promotion by covetousness  
and falshood. The Carl that came to the Em-  
peroz, betokeneth Adam our fore-Father, who

## The History of

came out of the Land of Eden, and turned up the black side of the Plaine, when he eat of the Apple of the forbidden Tree; wherefore he should have been condemned to everlasting death; but his Son, that betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, he took the flesh of Adam, and proffered himself voluntarily to dye for him; and the Father of Heaven granted that he should go down to dye for mankind.

Nevertheless, before he dyed, he asked three Petitions of his Father of Heaven: The first was this: That he might have by him his Daughter which betokeneth the Soul of man, and bring her with him into the bosom of Heaven, according to the words in Hosea, saying, I will wed her to my self.

The second Petition was this, all the Emperors treasure, which betokeneth the treasure of Heaven according to this Scripture, Like as the Father hath disposed for me, so I dispose for you.

The third Petition is this, That all their eyes should be put out; that is, that the Devil and all false witnesses which accuse us true men, might be put from the light of Heavenly Grace.

And thus saved he mankind, and led him up with him unto the Palace of Heaven. Unto the which Palace bring us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

The



## Gesta Romanorum.

### The Argument.

The Father of Heaven of his meer Grace promoteth some poor men, raising them from the dust, to sit among Princes, but they extolling themselves without regard of Gods goodness, they are again made abject by him. The Devil worketh deceit in his members against the Godly; Christ came down from Heaven to minister the water of eternal Life unto man, and by his Death and Passion to revive our Souls (which before were dead) unto the firm state of eternal felicity, to purchase happiness with his precious blood.

### The 36. History.

**I**n Rome there dwelt sometime a mighty Emperoz, named Leonicius, who on a day rode to a Forrest to disport himself, where he met suddenly with a poor man, to whom he said thus, Friend, what art thou? and whence comest thou?

My Lord (quoth he) I am come from the next City, and I am your man. Then said the Emperoz, thou seemest poor, therefore if thou be honest and true, I will promote thee to great riches and honour. Then answered the poor man, and said, My Lord, I promise you faithfully to be true to you as long as I live. The Emperoz anon made him a Knight, and gave him great riches. When he was thus promoted, he wared so proud, that he thought himself more able to be an Emperoz than his Lord; wherefore he made suggestion to divers Lords

## The History of

Lords of that Empire, that he might usurp and take upon him through strength of them to be Emperoz.

When the Emperoz heard this, anon he exiled him, and all those that were consenting to him, so they lived abjects in great wretchedness and sorrow: and then the Emperoz ordained other men in their stead, and gave them all the possessions of these Traytors.

And when the banished men heard that strangers had taken possession of their Lands and Goods, anon they conspired against them, and through treason requested them to a banquet. And they as innocents, thinking upon no such treason, came at the day assigned, and were served with five poisoned messes, whereby as many as tasted of those Dishes, died incontinent.

When the Emperoz heard this, he was greatly moved and assembled his counsel to inquire what was best to be done for this treason, and for their death. Then said the Emperors Son, My Lord, I am your Son, and you are my Father, and therefore I shall give you good counsel profitable to all men. Not far hence is a little Nation, wherein dwelleth a fair Maiden, and a gracious the sight of every man, which hath an Orchard wherein is a Well, the water whereof is of such vertue, that if it be cast upon a dead man straightly

## Gesta Romanorum.

straightway he shall live again and recover his life. Therefore my Lord, I shall descend unto that Prison, and seek that water, whereby they that were slain at the Banquet, may be restored again to life. And when the Emperour heard this, he greatly rejoyced, and said thus, Son, thy counsel is good.

And straightway the Emperours Son went unto the said Prison, and fell in conceit with the Maiden, inasmuch that he entred into the Garden and assayed to taste the Water of the Well. And when he had so done, he made the deep Trenches in the ground, in the which the water ran till it came where the dead men lay buried, hereupon when the Water touched them, they arose from death to life. Then the Emperours Son with great joy led them unto his Father: And when the Emperour saw this he was right joyful: wherefore he crowned his Son with a Laurel Crown in token of victory, and so ended his life in rest and the peace.

### The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperour betokeneth the Father of Heaven. The poor man that was promoted, betokeneth Lucifer, that was exalted of nought, and enthroned in the Embrace of Heaven with great joy and clearness, of such that through his pride he thought he might be equal unto the Almighty God, and not only like him,

## The History of

him, but more than Almighty God; wherefore the Father of Heaven exiled him, and all them that consented to him, to Hell: and in his place man was exalted to great joy and honour. The Devil seeing this, it much grieved him that man should come to such Glorie and Honour, and bade Adam and Eve to a Banquet when they did eat of the Apple against Gods Commandment, and counselled them thus saying, In what hour ye eat of this Apple ye shall be like Gods, knowing good and evil. And at this cursed Banquet, they were served with five Dishes that were poisoned, that is, their five Senses were accorded in eating of the Apple, whereof man was infected and dyed. This hearing, the Emperors Son, Christ Jesus, moved with mercy, he came down from Heaven into this World, and acquainted himself so well with the blessed Virgin Mary, that he found in her the Well of manhood, and conjoined it to the Godhead, according to the Scripture, I am the Well of Life, who drinketh of me shall not thirst. After that, he suffered to be made five trenches in the ground, that is, five wounds in his body, out of the which ran blood and water, whereby all mankind was redeemed from death to life, and led them up into the Palace of Heaven. Unto the which bring us O blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Gesta Romanorum.

### The Argument.

The Father of Heaven extendeth his goodnes  
divers ways towards frail man, yet he taketh  
contrary ways, living in Spiritual Fornicati-  
on, for the which being exiled from the state  
of felicity, he is compelled to lead a misera-  
ble and painful life. But being reconciled by  
the death of his Saviour, he possesseth the heri-  
tage of heavenly felicity.

### The 37. History.

Some time in Rome there reigned a mightie  
Emperour named Dunstanus, in whose  
Empire there dwelt a gentle Knight that  
had two Sons. One of his Sons matched  
himself against his Fathers will with a com-  
mon Harlot. The Knight hearing this, exiled  
his Son from him; and when he was thus  
exiled, he begat on this woman a Son: and  
when after that he waxed sick, and in penur-  
y; wherefore he sent Messengers to his Fa-  
ther, beseeching him of his Mercy: this hear-  
ing his Father, he took compassion and ruth  
on him, wherefore he was reclaimed from  
banishment; and when he was thus brought  
again to his Fathers grace, he gave his child  
which he had by the common Woman to his  
Father, who kindly received him and nourished  
him as his Son.

When the other Son heard this, he said to  
his Father, Father, quoth he, it seemeth  
me

me that you are out of your right mind, which I will prove by good reason. For he is out of his right mind that receiveth a false Heir and nourisheth him, whose Father hath endangered and grieved him before. Now my Brother which begat this Child, hath done you great injury, when he married the common Woman, against your will and commandment, therefore methinketh that you are out of your right mind.

Then answered his Father, and said, because thy Brother is reconciled to me, thou art envious, and thou art unkind to thy own Brother, willing to put him from thy fellowship for evermore, but soothly, no unkind man shall have Heritage except he be reconciled, and yet thou never reconciledst thy self to him, for thy unkindness, for thou mightest have reconciled thy self to him, but thou wouldest not, therefore of my Heritage gettest thou no part.

The Moral.

Dear Friends the Father of these two Brethren, betokeneth the Father of Heaven. And his two Sons betoken the nature of Angels, and the nature of Man: For man was married to a common woman, or Harlot, when he eat the Apple against the Commandment of God, wherefore he was exiled by the Father of Heaven, and put from the joys of Paradise.



Paradise, The Son of the common woman betokeneth mankind. This Knights Son, that is Adam, lived in great misery; for after his sin, he was put from joy into this wretched valley of tears and weeping, according to the Scripture, In the sweat of thy brows, thou shalt eat thy bread. But after by the passion of Christ he was reconciled. But the other Son that betokeneth the Devil was ever unkind, and grudged daily against our reconciling, saying, that by reason of sin we ought not to come unto the Heritage of Heaven. Unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The Argument.

We ought in every vocation and calling to behave our selves justly, and to use the poor man with equity: we must not injure rich men. The mighty men are to be honoured, and not defrauded of their dignity and estate, being men of sincere life: they that do contrary to the meaning of dutiful behoof herein, are worthy of everlasting death.

### The 38. History.

Sometime there dwelt in Rome a mighty Emperour named Donatus, which did make three Images, of the which one held out his hand straight unto the people, and had on his finger a Ring of Gold. The second Image had a Beard of Gold. And the third had a Mantle of Gold: commanding upon pain of death, that

that no man should take away from these Images, the King, the Beard, nor the Mantle.

It befel afterward upon a time, that one Dionyse a Tyrant, came into the Temple, and took away the King from the first Image, the Beard from the second, and the Mantle from the third. And when he had thus done, he was forthwith accused unto the Emperour, and brought befoze him, and strictly examined of that trespass, why he despoiled the Images against the Emperours Commandment.

Then answered Dionyse, and said as followeth, My reverend Lord, it is lawful to answer for my self. When I entred into the Temple, the first Image held forth his hand straight to me, as who would say, I give thee this King, and therefore I took the King as the gift of the Image, being loth to refuse so gentle an offer. And when I saw the second Image having a Beard, I thought thus with my self: I knew sometime the Father of the Image, which had no Beard, and now his Son hath a Beard, which is against Reason, the Son to have a Beard, and the Father none, and therefore I took from him his Beard, that he should be like his Father. After that when I saw the third, having a Mantle of Gold, I thought that the Mantle of Gold

Gold was not behoval for him in Winter: for Gold is naturally cold, which might be cause of his death, and therefore I took it from him, because it was too cold in Winter, and too hot in Summer.

When Dionyse had excused him by these reasons, the Emperour answered and said, Thou hast answered wickedly for thy self: What should cause thee rather than any other man to despoil the Images, for as much as I commanded that no man should take any thing away from them; therefore thine own mouth hath condemned thee. Anon the Emperour called to him one of his Squires, and charged him to smite off his head, and incontinently he took him, and did unto him as the Emperour had commanded, and so he died a shameful death.

#### The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperour betokeneth Almighty God the Father of Heaven. The three Images betokeneth the poor men, the rich men, and the mighty men of this World. The Tyrant Dionyse betokeneth all Officers in every estate, lewdly behaving themselves, which take away from poor men the Kings off their fingers, and say thus, I may take that is given me: For when the poor man hath ought to do, he must needs put forth his hand to give whether he will

## The History of

or no, if he would spee. They take away the Beard from the rich man, and say thus, This man is richer than his Father was, therefore take we his liuetihood from him, and make him like his Fore-father. They take also the Mantle of Gold from the mighty man: when they see any man of honour and good liuing, willing to correct such open misdoers, then say they, this man is too cold, for he inclineth nothing to our opinions, and also he is too hot in power and working against us, therefore go we and take from him the Mantle of might, and so they accuse him, and put him out of his Office. But certainly all such men stand in peril of everlasting death: From the which save us, he that shed his precious blood for us. Amen.

## The Argument.

Man ought to nourish Christ in his heart by Faith and fruits of good life: The reward of such as have care unto the Commandments and Institutions of God. We must watch lest we fall into temptation: These things considered, we shall then by Gods gracious good Providence attain unto the reward of Heavenly and Everlasting Bliss.

The

## The 39. History.

**T**here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperour, named Emiliu, who had a fair young Lady to his Wife, upon whom he had begotten a fair Son. When the States of the Empire heard this, they came to the Emperour and besought him to have the keeping of his Son. Immediately the Emperour sent a Herald throughout the City, proclaiming, that in whose House were first found fire and water, the good man of that House should have his Son in keeping, and to nourish. Anon then the Emperour made a Proclamation, that whosoever had his Son to keep, should nourish him cleanly, and feed him with wholesome meats, and drinks. And when the Child came to Age, then should the Keeper be promoted to great honour: Wherefore many men made ready fire and water, in hope to have the Child: But in the night, when every man was asleep, there came a Tyrant, named Sulapius, that quenched the fire, and threw out the water. Nevertheless, among all other, there was a man, named Jonathas, that laboured so diligently, that he kept both day and night fire and water.

In the morning early, the Herald at the

Emperors commandment, went through the City, and sought in every House for fire and water, but he could find none till he came to Jonathas's House, where he found both fire and water ready; wherefore he was brought before the Emperour, who deliuered him his Son according to the Proclamation.

When Jonathas had the Emperours Son, he led him home unto his House. And soon after he sent for Masons and Carpenters, and did make a strong Chamber of lime and stone. And when the Chamber was finished, he sent for Painters to paint on the wall of the Chamber, ten Images, with this Poësie painted above their heads, Whoso defileth these Images shall die a cruel death. And then caused a pair of Gallows to be drawn on the dooz, and figured a man hanging thereupon, with this Poësie painted above his head, So shall he be served that nourisheth the Emperours Son amiss. Also he caused a Chair of Gold to be made, and himself sitting therein crowned with a Crown of Gold, with this Superscription above the head, Whoso nourisheth the Emperours Son cleanly, thus shall he be honoured.

When this was done, oftentimes as he was asleep, he was greatly tempted to defile these ten excellent Images: but anon he

read



## Gesta Romanorum.

read the ~~Superscriptions~~ above their heads, and then all the temptations ceased. And when the Emperors Son was evilly kept, then he went to the Gallows, and read that ~~Posse~~ which was written above his own head, and for dread thereof kept the Child better, and was diligent to give attendance on him.

And when he beheld the Chair, and himself sitting therein crowned with a Crown of Gold, he was right joyful, thinking to have good reward for keeping of the Emperors Son. When the Emperoz heard of this diligent demeanour about his Son, he sent for him, and thanking him for his well keeping and nourishing of him, he after promoted him to great honour and dignity.

### The Moral.

This Emperoz betokeneth the Father of Heaven: The Emperess betokeneth the blessed Virgin Mary: The Emperors Son betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ: The Herald that was sent throughout the City, betokeneth Saint John Baptist, who was sent before our Lord to prepare the way to him, according to the Holy Scripture: Lo, I send mine Angel before me, &c. The States that desired the Emperors Son to

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nurish

## The History of

nourish, betokens the Patriarchs and Prophets, which desire greatly to nourish our Lord Jesus Christ, and also to see him, but they might not see him, nor nourish him, for fire and water, which should have been cause of their sight, was not with them perfectly,

The fire betokeneth the Holy Ghost, which had not yet appeared unto them, for they were not washed with the water of Baptism. Also, ye may understand by the fire, perfect Charity, and by the water true Contrition, which do now adays fail in many men, and therefore they may not have the little Child Jesus in their hearts.

Jonathas that watched so diligently, betokeneth every good Christian man, which studieth either to watch in well-doing, yielding to God for sins, the fire of charitable Repentance, and the water of Contrition. But oftentimes the Tyrant, which betokeneth the Devil, putteth out the fire of Charity out of mens hearts, and casteth out the water of Contrition, so that they may not nourish the little Child Jesus. Therefore let us watch as Jonathas did, that we enter not into temptation. And call we unto Pastors, that is, discreet Preachers, which can make in our hearts a Chamber of stone, that is, a true Faith and Hope.

Then

Then call we to vs Painters, that is, Mini-  
sters of Gods Word, which can paint in our  
hearts ten Images, that is, the Ten Com-  
mandments, which if thou keep and observe  
daily, without doubt thou shalt be honoured  
in Heaven.

And if thou keep well the Emperors Son,  
thou shalt sit in a Chair of Gold, crowned  
with a Crown of Gold. And if that thou  
nourish him not well, without doubt thou  
shalt be in danger of torment in Hell. From  
the which preserve us our blessed Saviour  
Jesus.

### The Argument.

The Soul of man espoused unto Christ, the  
Flesh procureth the same to sin. The Chri-  
stian Soul by Faith, withstandeth tempta-  
tion. The Redemption of mankind from  
Sin and Death. The deceits of unthankful  
hearts. The Spirits health, the defects of  
the Flesh. After a pure Repentance follow-  
eth perpetual Joy and Felicity both of Soul  
and Body.

### The 40. History.

**I**N Rome dwelt sometime a mighty Em-  
peror, named Manelay, which had wedded  
the Kings Daughter of Hungaria, a fair Lady,  
and gracious in all her works, especially  
she was Merciful. On a time, as the Em-

peroz lay in his bed, he bethought him that he would go visit the Holy Land. And on the morrow he called to him the Emperess his Wife, and his own only Brother, and thus he said; Dear Lady, I may not, nor will not hide from you the privities of my heart, I purpose to visit the Holy Land, wherefore I ordain thee principally to be Lady and Governess over all my Empire, and all my people; and under thee I ordain here my Brother to be thy Steward for to provide all things that may be profitable to my Empire and my people.

Then said the Emperess, sith it will no otherwise be, but that needs thou wilt go to visit the City of Jerusalem, I shall be in your absence as true as any Turtle that hath lost her Mate; for as I believe ye shall not escape thence with your life.

The Emperoz anon comforts her with fair words, and kissed her, and after that took his leave of her and all other, and went toward the City of Jerusalem.

And anon after the Emperoz was gone, his Brother became so proud, that he oppressed poor men, and robbed rich men; and he did worse than this, for he daily stirred the Emperess to commit sin with him: But she ever answered again as an holy and devout woman, and said; I will (quoth she) never consent

## Gesta Romanorum.

consent to you nor to any other as long as my Lord liueth; nevertheless this Knight would not leaue with this answer, but euer when he found her alone, he made his complaint to her, and stirred her by all the ways that he could to sin with him.

When this Lady saw that he would not cease for any answer, nor would not amend himself: when she saw her time, she called to her three or four of the worthiest men of the Empire, and said to them thus: It is not unknown to you, that my Lord the Emperour ordained me principal Governour of this Empire, and also he ordained his Brother to be Steward under me, and that he should do nothing without my counsel, but he doth all the contrary: for he oppresseth greatly poor men, and likewise robbeth the rich men: and yet he would do more than this if he might have his intent; wherefore I command you in my Lords name, that you bind him fast, and cast him into Prison.

Then said they, soothly he hath done many evil deeds since our Lord the Emperour went, therefore we be ready to obey your Commandments, but in this matter you must answer for us to the Lord our Emperour.

Then said she, Dread ye not, if my Lord knew

knew what he had done as well as I, he would put him to the foulest death that could be thought: Immediately these men laid hands on him, and bound him fast with Iron Chains, and put him in Prison, whereas he lay long time after, till at the last it fortuned, there came tydings that the Emperoz was coming home and had obtained great renown and victory. When his Brother heard of his coming, he said, would to God my Brother might not find me in Prison, for if he do, he will enquire the cause of my imprisonment of the Emperess, and she will tell him all the truth, how I moved her to commit sin, and so for her I shall have no favour of my Brother, but lose my life: this know I well: therefore it shall not be so. Then sent he a Messenger unto the Emperess praying her that she would vouchsafe to come to the Prison too, that he might speak a word or two with her.

The Emperess came to him, and enquired of him what he would have. He answered and said, O Lady, have mercy upon me, for if the Emperoz my Brother find me in Prison, then shall I die without any remedy,

Then said the Emperess, if I might know that thou wouldest be a good man, and leave thy folly, thou shouldest find grace. Then



did he promise her assuredly to be true, and to amend all his trespasses. When he had thus promised, the Empress deliver'd him anon, and made him to be bathed and shaven, and apparelled him worthily according to his state; and then she said unto him thus; Now good Brother take thy Steed, and come with me, that we may meet my Lord. He answered and said, Lady, I am ready to fulfill your will and commandment in all things; and then the Empress took him with her, and many other Knights, and so rode forth to meet the Emperour: and as they rode together by the way, they saw a great Hart run before them, wherefore every man with such Hounds as they had, chased him on Horseback, so that with the Empress was left no creature, save only the Emperours Brother, who seeing that no man was there but they two, thus he said unto the Empress; Lo, Lady, here is beside a private Forrest, and long it is ago that I spake to thee of love, come now and consent unto me, that I may lie with thee.

Then said the Empress, Ah soul, what may this be? Yesterday I delivered thee out of prison upon thy promise in hope of amendment, and now thou art returned to thy folly again; wherefore I say now unto thee, as I have said before, there shall no man do such a thing

## The History of

thing with me, save only my Lord the Emperoz, which ought of very duty for to do. Then said he, if thou wilt not consent to me, I shall hang thee here upon a Tree in this Forrest, where no man shall find thee, and so shalt thou die an evil death. The Empress answered meekly, and said, Though thou smite off my head, or put me to death with all manner of torments, thou shalt never have my consent to such a sin.

When he heard this, he unclothed her all save her Smock, and hanged her up by the Hair upon a Tree, and tyed her Steed before her, and so rode to his Fellows, and told them that a great Host of men met him, and took the Empress away from him, and when he had told them this, they made all great sorrow.

At besel on the third day after, there came an Earl to hunt in that Forrest, and as he rode beating the Bushes, he unkennels a Fox, whom his Hounds followed fast, till they came near the Tree where the Empress hanged. And when the Dogs smelt the labour of her, they left the Fox, and ran towards the Tree as fast as they could.

The Earl seeing this, wondred greatly, and spurring his Horse, followed them till he came where the Empress hanged. When the Earl saw

saw her thus hanging, he marvelled greatly, for as much as she was right fair and beautiful to behold; wherefore he said unto her in this manner wise: **A** Woman who art thou? and of what Country? and wherefore hangedst thou here in this manner.

The Emperess that was not yet fully dead, but at point ready to die, answered and said, I am, quoth she, a strange woman, and am come out of a far Country, but how I came hither God knoweth. Then answered the Earl and said, whose Horse is this that standeth by thee bound to this Tree? Then answered the Lady and said, that it was hers. When the Earl heard this, he saw well that she was a Gentlewoman and some of noble lineage, wherefore he was the rather moved with pity, and said unto her: **A** fair Lady thou seemest of gentle blood, and therefore I purpose to deliver thee from this mischief, if thou wilt promise to go with me, and nourish my fair young Daughter, and teach her at home in my Castle, for I have no Child but only her, and if thou keep her well thou shalt have a good reward for thy labour. Then said she: As far forth as I can or may, I shall fulfil your intent. And when she had thus promised him, he took her down off the Tree, and led her home to his Castle, and gave her the keeping of his Daughter.

Daughter, that he loved so much, and she was cherished so well, that she lay every night in the Carls Chamber, and his Daughter with her: and in the Chamber every night there burned a Lamp, which hanged between the Empresses bed and the Carls bed. This Lady behaved her self so gently, that she was beloved of every creature. There was at that time in the Carls House a Steward, which much loved this Empress, and often spake to her of his love. But she answered him again, and said, Know ye dear friend, for a certainty, that I will never love any man in such manner wise, but only him whom I am greatly bound to love by Gods Commandment.

Then said the Steward, Then thou wilt not consent unto me: Sir, quoth she, what need you any more to ask such things: The Vow that I have made, I will truly keep, and hold by the Grace of God.

And when the Steward heard this, he went his way in great wrath and anger, thinking within himself, if I may, I shall be revenged on thee.

It befel upon a night within short time after, that the Carls Chamber door was forgotten and left unshut, which the Steward had anon perceived: And when they were all asleep, he went and spyed by the light of  
the

the Lamp where the Emperess and the young Maiden lay together, and with that he drew out his Knife, and cutting the throat of the Carls Daughter, and put the Knife into the Emperesses hand, she being asleep, and nothing knowing thereof, to the intent, that when the Carl awaked, he should think that she had cut his Daughters Throat, and so would she be put to a shameful death for his mischievous deed. And when the Damsel was thus slain, and the bloody Knife in the Emperesses hand, the Countess awaked out of her sleep, and saw by the light of the Lamp, the bloody Knife in the Emperesses hand, wherefore she was almost out of her wits, and said to the Carl, O my Lord, behold in yonder Ladies hand a wonderful thing.

The Carl awaked, and looked toward the Emperesses bed, and saw the bloody Knife, as the Countess had said: wherefore he was greatly moved, and cryed to her, and said, awake woman out of thy sleep, what thing is this that I see in thy hand: Then the Emperess through his cry awaked out of her sleep, and in her waking the Knife fell out of her hand, and with that she looked by her, and found the Carls Daughter dead by her side, and all the bed bespinkled with blood, wherefore with an high voice she cryed, and said, Alas, alas, and woe is me, my Lords Daughter is slain.

Then

Then cried the Countess unto the Earl with a pitious voice, and said, O my Lord let this devillish woman be put to the foulest death that can be thought, which thus hath slain our only Child.

Then when the Countess had said thus to the Earl, he said to the Empress in this wise; The high God knoweth that thou mischievous Woman, hast slain my Daughter with thine own hands, for I saw the bloody Knife in thy hand, and therefore thou shalt die a foul death. Then said the Earl in this wise: O thou Woman, were it not I dread God greatly, I should cleave thy body with my Sword in two parts, for I delivered thee from hanging, and now thou hast slain my Daughter: nevertheless for me thou shalt have no harm, therefore go thy way out of this City, without any delay, for if I find thee here after this day, thou shalt die a most cruel death.

Then arose this woful Empress, and put on her Cloaths, and after leapt on her Palfry, and rode toward the East alone without any safe-conduct; and as she rode thus mourning by the way, she espyed on the left side of the way a pair of Gallows, and seven Officers leading a man to be hanged, wherefore she was moved with great pity and smote her Horse with her stick, and rode to



them, praying them he might redēem that misdoer if he might be saved from death by any means.

Then said they, Lady it pleaseh us well that you redēem him. Anon the Emprers accorded with them and payed his Ransom and he was delivered.

Then said she to him : Now my good friend be true unto me till thou dye, sith I have delivered thee from death.

On my soul (quoth he) I promise you ever to be true. And when he had thus said, he followed the Lady still, till they came nigh a City, and then said the Emprers to him : good friend, quoth she, go forth thy way afoze me into the City, and see thou take up for us an honest lodging, for there I purpose to rest a while. Her man went forth as she commanded, and took up her a good lodging, and an honest, where she abode a long time. When the men of the City perceived her beauty, they wondzed greatly; wherefoze many of them craved of her unlawfūl love, but all was in vain, for they might not spēd in any wise.

It fortunēd after upon a day, that there came a Ship full of Merchandise, and arrived in the Haven of that City. When the Lady heard this, she said unto her Servant :

## The History of

Go to the ship, and see if there be any cloath  
for my use.

Her servant went forth to the ship where-  
as he found many very fine cloaths: where-  
fore he prayed the Master of the Ship, that  
he would come into the City and speak with  
his Lady. The Master granted him, and  
so the servant came home to his Lady be-  
fore, and warned her of the coming of the  
Master of the Ship. Soon after the Master  
of the Ship came and saluted her courteously:  
and the Lady receiv'd him according to his  
degree, praying him that she might have for  
her money such cloath as might be profitable  
for her wearing. Then he granted that  
she should have any thing that liked her, and  
soon they were agreed, wherefore the Ser-  
vant went immediately again with the Ma-  
ster of the ship for the cloath. And when they  
were both within on Ship-board, the Master  
said to the Ladies servant: My dear friend,  
to thee I would open my mind, if I might  
trust to thee, and if thou help me, thou shalt  
have of me a great Reward.

Then answered he and said: I shall (quoth  
he) be sworn to thee to keep thy counsel and  
fulfil thine intent as far forth as I can.

Then said the Master of the Ship, I love  
thy Lady more than I can tell thee, for  
her beauty and feature is so excellent  
that

that I would give for the love of her, all the gold that I have: and if I may obtain the love of her through thy help, I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt desire of me.

Then said the Ladies servant: tell me by what means I may best help thee. Then said the Master of the Ship, go home to thy Lady again, and tell her, that I will not deliver to thee the cloath except she come herself; and do thou but bring her to my Ship, and if the Wind be good and fit, then I purpose to lead her away. Thy counsel is good, quoth the Ladies Servant, therefore give me some reward, and I shall fulfil thy desire.

Now when he had received his reward, he went again to the Lady, and told her, that by no means the Master of the Ship would deliver him the Cloath, except she came herself.

The Lady believed her Servant, and went to the Ship. Now when she was within the Ship-board, her Servant abode without.

When the Master saw that she was within the Ship, and the wind was good, he drew up the Sail, and sailed forth.

When the Lady perceived this, thus she said to the Master: O Master (quoth she)

## The History of

what treason is this thou hast done to me? The Master answered and said: Pardon certainly it is so, that I must needs lie with thee, and afterward espouse thee. A good Sir, quoth she, I have made a vow, that I shall never do such a thing but with him unto whom I am bound by right, and by the Law. Sothly, quoth he, if you will not grant me with your good will, I will cast you out into the midst of the Sea, and there shall ye die an evil death: if it be so, quoth she, that I must needs consent, or else dye, first I pray thee to prepare a private place in the end of the ship, whereas, I may fulfil thine intent ere I dye, and also I pray thee, that I may say my Prayers unto the Father of Heaven, that he may have mercy on me.

The Master believed her, wherefoze he did ordain her a Cabbin in the end of the ship, wherein she knéeled down on both her knees and made her prayers saying on this wise: O thou my Lord God thou hast kept me from my youth in cleanness, keep me now that I be not defloured, so that I may ever serve thee with a clean heart and mind, and let not this wicked man prevail with me nor any other the like wickedness come nigh me. When she had ended her prayers, there arose sudden.

suddenly a great tempest in the Sea, so that the ship all brast, and all that were therein perished, save the Lady; and she caught a Cable and saved her self, and the Master caught a board of the Ship, and saved himself likewise; nevertheless she knew not of him, nor he of her, for they were driven to divers coasts. The Lady landed in her own Empire near to a rich City, wherein she was honourably received, and she lived so holy a life that God gave her grace and power to heal sick folk of all manner of diseases; wherefore there came much people to her, both crooked, blind, and lame, and every man through the grace of God, and her good endeavour was healed, wherefore her name was known through divers Regions. Nevertheless she was not known as the Empress. At the same time the Emperors Brother (that had hanged her before by the Hair, was smitten with a foul Leprosie. The Knight that slew the Carls Daughter, and put the bloody knife in her hand was blind, deaf, and had the Palsie. The Thiel that betrayed her to the Master of the ship was lame and full of the cramp. And the Master of the ship distraught of his wits.

When the Emperoz heard that so holy a woman was in the City, he called h's brother, and said to him thus: Go we dear

## The History of

brother, unto this holy woman that is dwelling in this city, that she may heal thee of thy Leprosie. Would to God; O noble Brother (quoth he) that I were healed. Anon the Emperoz with his brother went toward the City. Then when the Citizens heard of his coming, they received him honourably with procession and all provision fitting his estate. And then the Emperoz enquired of the Citizens, if any such holy woman were among them, that could heal sick folk of their diseases. The Citizens answered, and said, that such an one there was. Now at the same time, was come to the same City, the Knight which slew the Carls Daughter, and the Thief which he saved from the Gallows, and the Master of the Ship to be healed of their diseases.

Then was the Empress called forth befoze the Emperoz; but she muffled her face as well as she could, that the Emperoz her Husband should not know her, and when she had so done, she saluted him with great reverence, as appertained to his state; and again he in like manner, saying thus: O good Lady, if thou list of thy kindness to heal my brother of his Leprosie, ask of me what you will, and I shall grant it thee for thy reward.

When the Empress heard this, she looked about



about her, and saw there the Emperors brother a foul Leper; he saw there also the Knight that slew the Carls Daughter, blind and deaf, the Thief that he saved from the Gallows Lame, and also the Master of the Ship distraught out of his wits, and all were come to her to be healed of their maladies, & knew her not; but though they knew her not, she knew them well. Then said she unto the Emperour thus: My reverend Lord, though you would give me all your Empire, I cannot heal your brother, nor none of these other, except they acknowledge openly what great evil they have done.

When the Emperour heard this, he turned him towards his brother, and said unto him: Brother, acknowledg openly thy Sin, befoze all these men, that thou mayest be healed of thy sickness. Then anon he began to tell how he had led his life, but he told not how he had hanged the Emperess in the Forrest by the hair of the head most despightfully.

When he had acknowledged all that him list, the Emperess replied and said: Soothly my Lord, I would gladly say unto him my medicine, but I wot right well it is in vain, for he hath not made a full confession.

The Emperour hearing this, he turned  
R 4
toward

## The History of

towards his Brother, and said in this wise : what evil, sorrow, or other unhappy wretchedness is in thee : seest thou not how that thou art a foul Leper : therefore acknowledg thy sin truly, that thou maist be whole, or else avoid my company for evermore.

Oh my Lord, quoth he, I may not tell my life openly, except I be sure of thy grace. What hast thou trespassed against me said the Emperoz : Then answered his brother, and said : Mine offence against thee is grievous, and therefore I ask thee heartily forgiveness. The Emperoz thought not on the Emperess, forasmuch as he supposed she had been dead many years before ; therefore he commanded his brother to tell forth wherein he had offended him, and he should be forgiven.

When the Emperoz had thus forgiven his brother, he began to tell openly how he had desired the Emperess to commit Adultery with him, and because she denied, he had hanged her by the hair in the Forrest on such a day.

When the Emperoz heard this, he was almost beside himself, and in his rage he said thus : O thou wretched creature, the vengeance of God is fallen upon thee, and were it not that I have pardoned thee thou shouldst dye the most shameful death that could be thought.

Then

Then said the Knight that slew the Carls Daughter, I wot not quoth he, what Lady you mean, but I wot that my Lord found on a time such a Lady hanging in the Forrest, and brought her home to his Castle, and he took her, and gave her his Daughter to keep, and I provoked her as much as I could to sin with me, but she would in no wise consent to me; wherefore I slew the Carls Daughter that lay with her, and when I had so done, I put the bloody knife in the Ladies hand, that the Carl should think that she had slain his Daughter with her own hand, and then was she exiled thence, but where she became I wot not.

Then said the Thief, I wot not of what Lady ye mean; but well I wot, that seven Officers were leading me to the Gallows, and such a Lady came riding by, and bought me of them, and then went I with her and afterwards I betrayed her unto the Master of the Ship.

Such a Lady quoth the Master of the Ship received I, and when we were in the midst of the Sea, I would have lain with her, but she knæled down to her prayers, and anon there arose such a tempest, that the ship all to brast, and all therein was drowned save she and I, but afterward what befel of her, I wot not,

Then

## The History of

Then cried the Empress with a loud voice, and said: Soothly dear friends, ye do now truly confess and declare the truth, wherefore I will now apply my medicine, and anon they received their healths.

When the Lady the Empress had thus done, she uncover'd her face to the Emperor, and he forthwith knew her, and ran to her, and embraced her in his arms, and kissed her oftentimes, and for joy he wept bitterly: saying, Blessed be God, now I have found that I desired. And when he had thus said, he led her home to the palace with great joy; and after, when it pleased Almighty God, they ended both their lives in peace and rest,

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperor betokeneth our Lord Iesus Christ. This Empress betokeneth a holy soul: This Emperors brother betokeneth the flesh, to whom our Lord hath given charge of the Empire, but most principally to the Soul; Nevertheless, the wretched flesh oft provoketh the Soul to sin, but the Soul that loveth God above all things, withstandeth that temptation, calleth to her ghostly power, that is, Reason, Will, Understanding and Conscience, and maketh them

them to imprison the flesh, that is disobedient to the Soul, in the Prison of true repentance unto the time it obey Reason in all things.

And thus in hope of mercy he sinneth again: to whom the holy Writer saith, Cursed be the man that sinneth in hope. And at the last the soul inclineth to the flesh, and letteth him out of the prison of Repentance, and washeth him from the filth of sin, and arrayeth him with good vertues, and maketh him leap on the Palfrey of charitable humility, and so rideth forth to meet our Lord with the sacrifice of thanksgiving. But alas, oft the siner trespasseth against holy Scripture, wherefore the Hart that is, the lust of the flesh, ariseth before him, and after runneth great hounds, that is, evil thoughts, and so long they chase, till the body and the soul be left alone, and then the flesh stirreth that pure soul, being the Spouse to Almighty God: but the pure and undefiled soul that is so well beloved with God, will not forsake our Lord, and consent to Sin: wherefore the wretched Flesh full oft dispoileth her of her cloathing, that is, of her vertues, and hangeth her up by the hair on an Oak, that is, on lusts, and delights, and there she hangeth till the good Earl cometh, that is, a discreet Preacher in the Forrest of this world,

to

## The History of

to preach and teach the Word of God : then he taketh her down, and leadeth her forth to the Church, to nourish his Daughter, that is, to nourish Conscience with fruitful faith. The Earl had in his Chamber a Lamp : right so every discret Preacher should have before him the Lamp of holy Scripture whereby he may see both the grievance and profit of the Soul in learning vertues, and putting away of vice. The Steward that stirreth her to sin, is nought else but the pride of life, which is Steward of this world; by whom many men are deceived. But when the Soul that is so well beloved with Christ, will not consent unto the sin of pride, then taketh this evil Steward the Knife of Covetise, wherewith he slayeth the Earls Daughter, that is, Conscience, according to the Scripture, saying : Gold and Silver hath blinded the eyes of Judges, and hath overthrowne wise men, so that equity and righteousness might not enter, but stood afar, and turned their backs. This Lady also redeemed a man from death : that is from everlasting death, which he hath deserved by deadly sin : Therefore do we as this Lady, smite we our horse, that is, our flesh, with the spurs of repentance, and so ride we forth in all haste to save our neighbour from the sink of deadly sin, to help him both bodily and ghostly as Solomon saith.

Wo



Wo to that man that lyeth in deadly sin, that hath no man to lift him out thereof. Therefore awake thy Neighbour and help. For a Brother that is holpen of another, is like a sure City, and if he give but a Cup of cold water in the way of help, he shall not lose his Reward.

But many now adays be very unkind, as was the Thief which deceived the Lady, after that she had saved him from hanging.

The Master of the ship betokeneth the World, by whom many men be deceived. But nevertheless as oft as a man taketh on him voluntarily the Commandments of God, and forsaketh the World, then breaketh he the ship. For it is impossible to please God and man, and the world, all at one time.

When this Lady had escaped the tempest of the Sea, she went to a City, that is, the Soul after the troubles of this world, went to the holy life, and there she healed all manner of sick folk, that is, every man that is troubled in his soul, that is infected with divers sicknesses, those that his Lady healed through holy life. But they could not be healed till they had first confessed their sins to the Empress, the Church of God, and then she healeth them by repentance and amendment of

## The History of

of life: yet all this while was the Emperess unknown to her Husband, that is the Church wandring in the wilderness of this wicked world, until God by miraculous means made her known unto him, and so led her home by victory and triumph in the truth, unto the heavenly habitation of eternal rest and glory: Unto the which Almighty God bring us all for his Sons sake, Amen.

## The Argument.

Every supream Magistrate and other inferior, ought to be honoured and revered. Every true Christian ought to consider his duty herein, and every false Christian perverting the ways of the godly; reward for such is laid up in Hell, but the just shall inherit the blessed life everlasting.

## The 40. History.

**I**N Rome sometime dwelt a mighty Emperoz named Martin, which for entire affection kept with him his brothers son, whom men called Fulgentius. With this Martin dwelt also a Knight that was Steward of the Empire, and Uncle unto the Emperoz, which envied this Fulgentius, studying day and night how he might bring the Emperoz and this youth at debate. Wherefore the Steward on a day went to the Emperoz, and said

Gesta Romanorum.

saide my Lord, quoth he, I that am your true  
seruant, am bound in duty to warn your  
Highness, if I hear any thing that toucheth  
your Honour, wherefore I haue such things  
that I must needs utter it in secret to your  
Majesty betwene us two : Then saide the  
Emperour, good friend, say on what thee  
list.

My most dear Lord (quoth the Steward)  
Fulgentius your Cousin and your nigh kins-  
man, hath defamed you wonderfully and  
shamefully throughtout all your Empire, say-  
ing that your breath stinketh, and that it is  
death to him to serue your Cup. Then the  
Emperour was grievously displeased, and al-  
most beside himself for anger, and saide unto  
him thus : I pray thee good friend tell me the  
very truth, if that my breath stinketh as he  
saith. My Lord (quoth the Steward) ye may  
believe me, I never perceived a sweeter  
breath in my days than yours is. Then saide  
the Emperour : I pray thee good friend, tell  
me how I may bring this thing to good  
proof.

The Steward answered and saide : My Lord  
(quoth he) ye shall right well understand the  
truth ; for to morrow next when he serveth you  
of your cup, ye shall see that he will turn away  
his face from you, because of your breath,  
and this is the most certain proof that may  
be.

## The History of

he had of this thing. Verily quoth the Emperoz, a truer proof cannot be had of this thing. Therefore anon when the Steward heard this, he went straight to Fulgentius, and took him aside, saying thus : Dear friend, thou art near Kinsman and also Nephew unto my Lord the Emperoz, therefore if thou wilt be thankful unto me, I will tell thee of a fault whereof my Lord the Emperoz complaineth oft, and thinks to put thee from him (except it be the sooner amended) and that will be a great reproof to thee. Then said this Fulgentius : Ah good Sir, for his love that dyed upon the Cross, tell me why my Lord is so sore moved with me, for I am ready to amend my fault in all that I can or may, and for to be ruled by your discret counsel.

Thy breath (quoth the Steward) stinketh so sore, that his drink doth him no good, so grievous unto him is the stinking breath of thy mouth. Then said Fulgentius unto the Steward : Truly, that perceived I never till now ; but what think ye of my breath, I pray you tell me the very truth : Truly (quoth the Steward) it stinketh greatly and foul : And this Fulgentius believed all that he had said, and was right sorrowful in his mind, & prayed the Steward of his counsel and help in this woful case. Then said the Steward unto him,

if

if that thou wilt do my counsel, I shall bring this matter to a good conclusion, wherefore do as I shall tell thee.

I counsel thee for the best, and also warn thee that when thou serbest my Lord the Emperour of his Cup, that thou turn thy face away from him, so that he may not smell thy stinking breath, until the time that thou hast provided thee of some remedy theretofore.

Then was Fulgentius right glad, and sware to him that he would do by his counsel.

Not long after it befel that this young man Fulgentius serbed his Lord as he was wont to do, and therewith suddenly he turned his face from the Lord the Emperour, as the Steward had taught him.

And when the Emperour perceived the avoiding of his head, he smote this young Fulgentius on the breast with his foot, and said to him thus: O thou lewd Warlet; now I see well it is true that I have heard of thee, and theretofore go thou anon out of my sight that I may see thee no more in this place. And with that this young Fulgentius wept full sore, and avoided the place, and went out of his sight.

And when this was done, the Emperour called unto him his Steward and said, How may I rid this Warlet from the World, that thus hath defamed me? O my most dear Lord,

¶

quoth

quoth the Steward, right well you shall have your intent.

For here beside, within this three miles, ye have Brick-makers, which daily make great fire, for to burn Brick, and also they make Lime; therefore my Lord, send to them this night, charge them upon pain of death, that whosoever cometh to them first in the morning, saying to them thus: My Lord commandeth them to fulfil his will, that they take him and cast him into the Furnace, and burn him: and this night command you this Fulgentius, that he go early in the morning to your Workmen, and that he ask them, whether they have fulfilled your will which they were commanded, or not; and then shall they (according to your Commandment) cast him into the fire, and thus shall he die an evil death.

Surely (quoth the Emperour) thy counsel is good, therefore call to me that Warlet Fulgentius. And when the young man was come to the Emperours presence, he said to him thus, I charge thee upon pain of death, that thou rise early in the morning, and go to the burners of Lime and Brick, and that thou be with them early before the Sun rise, three miles from this house, and charge them in my behalf that they fulfil my Commandment, or else they shall die a most shameful death.

Then



Then spake this Fulgentius: My Lord, if God send me my life I shall fulfil your will, were it hat I go to the Worlds end.

When Fulgentius had this charge, he could not sleep for thought, that he must rise early to fulfil his Lords Commandment. The Emperoz about midnight sent a Messenger on horseback unto his Brick-makers, commanding that upon pain of death, that whosoever came to them first in the morning, saying unto them (as is before rehearsed) they should take him and bind him, and cast him into the fire, and burn him to the bare bones.

The Brick-makers answered and said, it should be done. Then the Messenger returns home again, and told the Emperoz that his Commandment should be diligently fulfilled.

Early in the morning following, Fulgentius arose and prepared him toward his way, and as he went, he heard a Bell ring to Service, wherefoze he went to hear Service, and after the end of Service he fell asleep, and there slept a long while so soundly, that the Priest nor none other might awake him.

The Steward desiring inwardly to hear of his death, about two of the clock he went unto the Workmen, and said unto them thus: Sirs (quoth he) have ye done the Emperors commandment or no?

## The History of

The Brick-makers answered him, and said: No truly, we have not yet done his Commandment, but it shall be done, and with that they laid hands on him. Then cried the Steward, and said, Good sirs save my life, for the Emperour commanded that Fulgentius should be put to death. Then said they, the Messenger told us not so, but he bade us, that whosoever came first in the morning, saying as you have said, that we should take him, and cast him into the Furnace, and burn him to ashes: and with that they threw him into the fire.

And when he was burnt, Fulgentius came to them and said: Good sirs, have you done my Lords Commandment, yea, soothly said they, and therefore go ye again to the Emperour, and tell him so. Then said Fulgentius, For Christs love tell me that commandment.

We had in commandment said they upon pain of death, that whosoever came to us first in the morning, and said like as thou hast said, that we should take him and cast him into the Furnace: But before that, came the Steward, and therefore have we fulfilled on him the Emperours commandment, now he is burnt to the bare bones.

When Fulgentius heard this, he thanked God, that he had so preserved him from death,  
therefore

therefore he took his leave of the workmen, and went again to the Palace.

When the Emperour saw him, he was almost distract of his wits for anger, and thus he said : Hast thou been with the Brick-makers, and fulfilled my commandment? Soothly my gracious Lord I have been there, but ere I came there, your commandment was fulfilled : How may that be true quoth the Emperour.

Forsooth said Fulgentius, the Steward came to them afoze me, and said that I should have said, so they took him and threw him in to the Furnace, and if I had come any rather, so would they have done to me, and therefore I thank God, that he hath preserved me from death.

Then said the Emperour, tell me the truth of such questions as I shall demand of thee. Then said Fulgentius to the Emperour : you never found me in any falshood, and therefore I greatly wonder why ye have ordained such a death for me : For well ye know, that I am your own brothers Son. Then said the Emperour to Fulgentius : It is no wonder, for that death I ordained for thee through counsel of the Steward, because thou didst defame me throughout all my Empire, saying : that my breath did stink so grievously, that it was death to thee, and in token thereof thou

## The History of

turnedst away thy face when thou servest me of my Cup, and that I saw with mine eyes : and for this cause I ordained for thee such a death ; and yet thou shalt die, except I hear a better excuse.

Then answered Fulgentius, and said ; Ah dear Lord, if it might please your Highness for to hear me, I shall shew you a subtil and deceitful imagination. Say on quoth the Emperoz.

The Steward (quoth Fulgentius) that is now dead, came to me and said, that ye told unto him that my breath did stink, and thereupon he counselled me, that when I served you of your Cup, I should turn my face away, I take God to witness I lie not.

When the Emperoz heard this, he believed him, and said : O my Nephew, now I see through the right wise judgment of God, the Steward is burnt, and his own wickedness and envy is fallen on himself, for he ordained this malice against thee, and therefore thou art much bound to Almighty God that hath preserved thee from death,

## The Moral.

Dear Friends, this Emperoz betokeneth every Supream Magistrate, and Fulgentius his Nephew betokeneth every true Christian

## Gesta Romanorum.

man, which should truly serve them with faithful loyalty, like as Fulgentius served the Emperoz at his cup, wherefore he shall be greatly loved of God. This Steward betokeneth every false Christian man, as Cain, which oftentime turned the heart of right wise men from God, saying that his breath stinketh; that is, that the life of this Magistrate is not acceptable to God or man, which is against the Scripture, which saith, Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. But oftentimes such malicious people accuse righteous men, wherefore they shall be cast into the everlasting fire of hell, where is wailing and weeping, and misery without end. But the righteous shall ascend to everlasting life. Unto the which bring us, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### The Argument.

Tyrants and ungodly persons walk without knowledge of the Truth, till they come to the Church of God; the wicked persecute the Godly, but as they are preserved by the mighty providence of God, so they ought not to sleep in sin. A figurative speech of three several meanings, viz. Take, Yield, and Flee: the signification therefore.

### The 42 History.

**T**Here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperour, named Delphinus, which had

## The History of

no Childzen save only a Daughter, which was a fair creature, and well beloved of her Father.

As this Emperoz rode on a day on Hunting in the Forrest, suddenly he rode out of his way, and lost his men; wherefore he was greatly discomfited, for he wist not whither he rode, nor in what place he was; till at the last when he had thus ridden all the day alone, in the evening he saw a House, and thither he rode a great pace, and knocked at the Gate: immediately the good man of the house heard him, and asked the cause of his knocking, and what he would have: Dear friend quoth the Emperoz, lo it is night, as ye may see: Therefore I desire of you a lodging for the Love of God.

When he had thus said, the good man of the House, unawares that he was the Emperoz answered and said: Good friend (quoth he) I am the Emperozs Foster, and have plenty of Menison, and other victual for you: When the Emperoz heard this, he was right glad in his mind, nevertheless, he told him not that he was the Emperoz. Then the Foster opened the Gate, and received him as he could, and set him to supper, and served him worthily. And when he had supped, the Foster brought him to his Chamber, and when time was he went to bed.



In the same night it befel, that the Fosters Wife did travel of a child in another Chamber hard by, and was delivered the same night of a goodly Son. And as the Emperoz lay in his bed sleeping, him seemed he heard a voice saying to him thrice these words: Take, take, take, And with that he awake, and marvelled greatly what it might be, saying to himself thus: A voice biddeth me Take, take, take, What shall I take? And immediately he fell asleep again.

And the second time he heard a voice saying unto him these words, Yield, yield, yield. And with that he awakned again, and wondered greatly, saying unto himself: What may this signifie? First I heard a voice that said, Take, take, take, and nothing I received: and right now I heard another voice that said, Yield, yield, yield; What should I yield.

And as he lay thus thinking with himself, he fell asleep again. And then he heard the third voice, saying these words thrice: Flee, flee, flee; For this night is a Child born, that after thy decease shall be Emperor. When the Emperoz heard this, he awakened, and wondered greatly what it might be.

In the morning following, the Emperoz called to him the Foster, and said: Dear friend I pray thee tell me, if any child be born here about

## The History of

about this night to thy knowledge. My Wife quoth the Foster, this night is delivered of a Son. I pray thee, said the Emperour, shew me thy Son. When the Emperour had seen the Child, he saw a mark in the Childs Visage, whereby he might know him another time : and he said to the Foster thus,

Dear friend, knowest thou who I am ? Nay soothly, quoth the Foster, for I never saw you before this time, as far as I can remember, nevertheless it seemeth that ye be a Gentleman. Then answered the Emperour and said, I am the Emperour your Lord, whom you have lodged this night : Wherefore I give thee hearty thanks. This hearing the Foster, he fell down upon both his knees at his feet, and besought him of Mercy, if that he had offended his Highness in any thing. Then answered the Emperour, and said, Be thou nothing afraid, for I thank thee heartily for thy good cheer, and thy Son that was born to night, I will have to bring up in my Court, and shortly I will send for him.

O my gracious Lord, quoth the Foster, it is not that such a noble Emperour should nourish the Child of his Subject and Servant : nevertheless your will be fulfilled, and when your Messengers come, I shall deliver them my Son.

Then the Emperour took his leave, and rode home

home to his Palace. And shortly after he was come home, he called unto him such Seruants as he trusted best, and said unto them thus: Go ye unto my Foster, with whom I was lodged such a night in the Forrest, and receive of him his Son, of which his Wife was deliuered that night, and upon pain of death, I command you, that you slay him by the way, and cast his flesh to the Dogs, but bring with you the heart to me: and except ye fulfil my commandment, ye shall die the cruellest death that can be thought. Anon his Seruants went to the Forrest, and received the Fosters Son, and brought him with them, and when they were come near unto the Palace, one of them said, How shall we do that we may fulfil our Lords Commandment in slaying of this Child: Some answered and said, that the Child should be slain, and some would have his life saved; and while they were thus striving among themselves, one of them that was most merciful said unto the rest: O my good loving Friends, hear my counsell, I beseech you, and ye shall not repent you thereof. If we murder this innocent Child, we shall greatly offend Almighty God; and behold here by are young Pigs, kill we one of them, and then we may take with us his heart, and present it unto the Emperour, saying, that it is the heart of the young Child. Then said they, thy counsell is good,  
but

## The History of

but what shall we do with the Child : Good friend (quoth he) let us wrap it in some cloaths, and lay him in some hollow tree, for peradventure God will help him, and save his life.

When he had thus said, they did after his counsel in all things, and killed a Pig, and went their way, and carried home with them the Pigs heart to the Emperoz, saying unto him thus : No gracious Lord we have destroyed the Child, as ye commanded us, and with that they shewed him the Pigs heart. The Emperoz supposing it had been the Childs heart, took it, and cast it into the fire despightfully, saying : No, there is the heart of him which should have been Emperoz after me ; No, what it is to believe in dreams which be but fantassies and vain things.

The same day after the Child was put in to the hollow tree, there came an Earl to hunt in the Forrest, and as his Hounds chased an Hart, they came to the hollow tree, where the child lay, and when they smelt the savour of the Child they would go no further. The Earl seeing this, marvelled why his Hounds abode there, and smote his Horse with his spurs, he rode a great pace till he came unto them. And when he came unto the Tree wherein the Child was laid, he looked in at a hole, and saw there the Child lying, and then

then he was right glad, and took the Child up in his arms full lovingly, and bare it home to his Castle, saying unto the Countess his Wife : Lo my dear wife, this day by fortune I have found a very fair Child in a hollow tree as I hunted in the Forrest, whereof I am right glad : And because thou never yet conceivedst a Child, therefore I exhort thee that thou wilt feign thy self to travail with Child, and say that thou hast born this Child ; the Countess fulfilled gladly the Carls desire, and said : My most dear Lord, your will in this thing shall be done.

Not long after, this news went throughout all the Country, that the Countess was delivered of a fair Son, wherefore every man rejoiced much.

The Child began to grow, and was well beloved of every man, and especially of the Carl and the Countess. It befell when the Child was fifteen years of age, the Emperour made a solemn feast unto all the Lords of his Empire, unto the which feast this Carl was called, who at the day assigned came, and brought his Son with him, which was at that time a fair young Squire, and he carbed at the board before the Carl. The Emperour steadfastly beheld him, and espied the token in his forehead, which he had seen in the Forsters House, wherewith he was greatly moved with

## The History of

within himself, and said unto the Carl in this manner. Whose Son is this? Certes, said the Carl, he is my Son. Then said the Emperoz, By the Faith that thou owest to me, tell me the truth.

The Carl seeing that he might not excuse himself, but that needs he must tell him the truth, told how he found him in a hollow Tree. This hearing the Emperoz, he was distract of his Wits for anger, and called to him his Servant, which he had sent before to destroy the Child. And when they came before him, he made them to swear that they should tell him the truth what they had done with the Child.

Gracious Lord said they, we yield us unto your Grace and goodness, for pity so moved us, that we might not destroy him, but we put him in a hollow Tree: what befall of him afterward, certainly we know not, and in his stead we killed a Pig, and brought the heart thereof unto you.

When the Emperoz heard the truth of the matter, he said unto the Carl: This young man (quoth he) shall abide with me: The Carl immediately granted, though it was greatly against his will.

When the Feast was ended, every man took his leave of the Emperoz, and went whereas they list. And at that time it fortun-  
ned,



ned, that the Emperess and her Daughter sojour-  
ned in another Countrey far from thence by  
the Commandment of the Emperoz.

Not long after the Emperoz said unto this  
young Squire, it behoveth thee to ride unto  
the Emperess my Wife with my Letters. I  
am ready at your Commandment my Lord,  
said he, to fulfil your desire. Immediately  
the Emperoz wrote Letters, the intent where-  
of was this, that the Emperess should take the  
bearer of these Letters, and let him be drawn  
at the Horse Tail, and after that she should let  
him be hanged till he be dead, and that on pain  
of death. When the Letters were all sealed,  
the Emperoz gave them unto the young  
Squire, commanding him to speed him on his  
journey. And straightway the young Squire  
put them close into a box, and rode forth on his  
journey. When he had ridden three or four  
days on his journey, in an evening he came un-  
to a Castle where dwelt a Knight, and gently  
desired of him a nights lodging.

The Knight beholding the sweet labour of  
the young Squire, made him good cheer, and  
afterward brought him into his Chamber;  
and when he was there, he went to bed, and  
immediately fell asleep, for he was full weary  
of his journey, and forgot his box with the Let-  
ters, lying openly in his Chamber.

When the Knight saw the box, he opened  
it

## The History of

it, and found the Letters sealed with the Emperors sign manual, and was greatly tempted to open them, and at the last he opened them neatly, and then read how the Emperess upon pain of death should put the bearer of them to death; and then he was right sorrowful, and said within himself: Alas (quoth he) it is great pity to slay so fair and proper a man; and immediately after, the Knight razed out that writing, and wrote in the same place, these words following: Upon pain of death, I command thee, that thou take this young Squire, bearer of these Letters, and let him be wedded without any delay unto my Daughter and yours, with all Honour and Solemnity that can be thought; and when they be married, that ye make as much account of him, as if he were your own Son, and that he supply my room till I come unto you my self.

When the Knight had thus written, he closed the Letters neatly, and put them into the box again. Early in the morning the young Squire arose, and hastily made ready, and took his leave of the Knight and rode forth on his journey, and the third day after he came unto the Emperess, and saluted her dutifully in the Emperors behalf, and gave her the Letters. When the Emperess had read them, anon she sent forth her Messengers through the Country, commanding

manding the States and Gentlemen to come unto her Daughters Wedding on a day assigned.

When the day was come, thither came many great Lords and Ladies, and anon the young Squire espoused the Emperors Daughter with great honour, according to the tenor of the Letters, and was much honoured among the people.

Not long after it befel, that the Emperoz came into the Country, and when the Emperess heard of his coming, she took with her her Son-in-Law, with much other people, and went to welcome the Emperoz. When the Emperoz saw this young Squire leading the Lady his Wife, he was greatly moved within himself, and said, O thou cursed Woman, because thou hast not fulfilled my commandment thou shalt dye an evil death.

O my dear Lord (quoth she) all that you commanded me to do I have fulfilled. Nay cursed Woman, said the Emperoz, it is not so, for I wrote to thee that thou shouldest put him to death, and yet he is alive. My Lord, quoth the Emperess, you wrote to me that I should give him your Daughter to Wife, and that on pain of death, in witness whereof, lo here your Letters sealed with your own Seal Manual.

When the Emperoz saw this, he wondered greatly

## The History of

greatly and said, Is he then espoused to my Daughter? Hea surely said the Emperess, long ago with great solemnity, and as I perceiue your Daughter is with Child. Then said the Emperoz: O Lord Iesus, it is great folly to strive against thine ordinance, therfore sith it is so, thy will must needs be fulfilled. And with that he took his Son in Law in his arms and kissed him, which after his death was Emperoz and ended his life in rest and peace.

## The Moral.

This Emperoz may betoken Herod, who would haue slain the Child Iesus, wherfore he sent Messengers to seek him; according to the Scripture, shewing how he commanded thre Kings to seek him, and bring him tidings again where he was, that he might come and worship him also. The Foster betokeneth Joseph our Ladies Husband, which kept him, but when the thre Kings came, they slew him not, but worshipped him on their knees, and left him in the hollow tree of his Godhead. The Earl that found this Child, betokeneth the Holy Ghost which warned Joseph by the Angel in his sleep, that he should take our Lady and her Son and flee into Egypt.

By the first take may be understood the great benefit that he gave the, when he gave the

hæe a soul made to his own similitude. By the second take is understood, the Son of God, which was boyn of the blessed Virgin Mary. By the third take is understood the same Son of God which died upon the Cross.

By the first yield is understood, that we ought to yield our Soul unto Almighty God, as clean as he gave us it after our regeneration in Baptism. By the second yield, that we ought to yield honour, worship, and love unto Almighty God, and man. By the third yield, that we ought to yield to God true confession of faith, contrition of heart, and amendment of life.

The first flee betokeneth sin, which we should flee: the second flee betokeneth the world, which we should flee, for the great temptations that are therein. The third flee betokeneth everlasting pain, the which we ought to flee through faith, by the which we may come to everlasting blisse: unto the which bring us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

The Argument.

The soul of man being ravished by the Tyranny of sin, she complaineth unto Christ, which heareth her. The Tyrant is overcome by Christ, who espouseth her unto him, preparing a place of perpetual joy for her. Christ receiveth patient sinners to his mercy by his death and passion.

## The History of

### The 43. History.

**T**Here dwelt sometime in Rome a mighty Emperoz, named Sontasinus, which ordained a Law, that whosoever ravished a Virgin should die, and if she were rescued, then he that rescued her, should have her to wife, if him list: and if he would not marry her, then she should be espoused by his appointment. It befel on a day, that a Tyrant named Poncianus, led a Virgin into a Forrest, and defloured her of her Maiden-head. And when he had so done he would have slain her, and as he was despoiling her of her Clothes, there came riding by the Forrest a Gentle Knight, which heard the lamenting of the Damsel, wherefore he rode a great pace into the Forrest to seek what it might be. Now when he came, he saw a Woman standing all naked, save only her Smock, to whom the Knight spake; Art thou she (said he) that cried so lamentably? Then answered the Damsel, Yea certainly, for this man that standeth here hath ravished, and defloured me of my Maiden-head, and now he would slay me, and therefore he hath despoiled me of my Clothes: for the love of God gentle Knight help me now. Then said the Tyrant, she lieth, for she is my Wife, and I have found her in Adultery with  
anot her



another man, therefore I will slay her. Then said the Knight, I believe better the Woman than thée, for so the tokens appear openly in her visage, that thou hast ravished her, therefore will I fight with thée for her deliverance. And immediately they buckled both together and fought eagerly till they were both sore wounded. Nevertheless, the Knight obtained the Victory, and put the Tyrant to flight.

Then said the Knight unto the Woman, Lo, I have suffered for thy love many sore Wounds, and have saved thée from Death, wilt thou therefore promise to be my Wife? thereto I assent (quoth she) with all my heart, and thereupon I plight thée my troth. When they were thus ensured, then said the Knight as followeth.

Here beside is my Castle, go thither, and abide there till I have provided all things needful for our Wedding, for I purpose to make a great Feast thereat. My Lord (quoth she) I am ready to fulfil your will: They went she unto the Castle, whereat she was worthily receiv'd: and the Knight went unto his Friends for to bid them to the Marriage. In the mean while came Poncianus the Tyrant to the Knights Castle, and prayed her that he might speak with her. Then came she down from the Castle to him, and this Tyrant subtilly

P 3

flattered

## The History of

flattered her, and said, Gentle love, if it please you to consent to me, I shall give you both Silver, and Gold, and great Riches, and I shall be your servant, and ye my Sovereign. When the Woman heard this, full lightly she was deceived through his flattering language, and soon granted him to be his Wife, and took him to her in the Castle.

Not long after the Knight came home and found the Castle Gate shut, and knocked thereat, but long it was ere he might have answer. At the last the Woman came and demanded why he knocked at the Gate. Then said he to her, O sweet Lady, why hast thou so soon changed thy love: let me come in. Nay surely, said she, thou shalt not come in here, for I have here with me my old love, which I loved before: remember, quoth the Knight, thou gavest me thy troth to be my Wife, and how I saved thee from death, and if thou ponder not thy faith, behold my wounds which I have suffered in my body for thy love. And so he unclothed himself naked all save his hosen, that he might shew his Wounds openly. But she would not see them, nor speak more with him, but shut fast the Gate and went her way. Now when the Knight saw this, he went to the Judge, and made his complaint to him, praying him to give him right judgment on the Tyrant and the Woman.

Then

When the Judge called them both before him, and when they were come, the Knight said thus: My Lord, I ask the benefit of the Law, which is this: If a man rescue a woman from ravishing, the rescuer shall marry her if him list, and this Woman I delivered from the hands of the Tyrant, therefore I ought to have her to my Wife: and furthermore she gave her faith and troth to marry with me, and thereupon we went to my Castle, and I have been at great cost against our Weeding, and therefore as it seemeth to me, she is my Wife by the Law.

Then said the Judge to the Tyrant, Thou knowest well that this Knight delivered her from thy hand, and for her love hath suffered grievous wounds, and therefore well thou wotest that she is his Wife by the Law if that him list. But after her deliverance, with flattering speech thou hast deceived her, therefore I judge thee to be hanged.

Then said the Judge to the Woman, likewise, O Woman, thou knowest how this Knight saved thee from death, and thereupon thou betrodest him thy faith and troth to be his Wife, first by the Law, and after by faith and troth: this notwithstanding, thou consentest afterward to the Tyrant and broughtest him into the Knights Castle, and didst shut the Gate against the Knight, and would not

## The History of

see his wounds which he suffered for thy love, and therefore I judge thee to be hanged also. And so it was done, both the Ravisher and he that was ravished, were condemned to death, wherefore every man praised the Judge for his wise judgment.

## The Moral.

This Emperour betokeneth the Father of Heaven which ordained a Law, that if the soul of man were ravished from God by sin, the Saviour of the Soul should espouse her if him list. The Woman that was ravished betokeneth the Soul of man, which was ravished by the sin of our fore-father Adam, and led out of Paradise into the Forest of this wretched world by the Tyrant Poncianus, which betokeneth the Devil, and he not only defiled her, losing the heritage of Heaven, but also he would slay her with everlasting pain. But the Soul crieth with an high voice, whose cry our Lord Jesus Christ heard. This cry was made when Adam cried after the Dyn of mercy: And the Patriarchs and Prophets cried for remedy, saying these words: O thou highest in the East, visit thou us, &c.

The Knight betokeneth our Lord Jesus Christ, which came from Heaven, and fought with the Tyrant, that is the Devil, and both they

they were sore wounded; for our Lord Jesus Christ was wounded in the flesh, and the Devil maimed in his Kingdom: Wherefore the Woman, that is, the Soul, gave her faith and troth unto Christ Jesus, when she became a Christian, saying these words, I forsake the Devil and all his Pride, and believe in God the Father Almighty. Then ordained our Lord Jesus Christ a Marriage between him and her with the two special Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lords Supper, whereof may be made a strong Castle against the Devil. Also our Lord commanded the Soul to keep her still in the Castle of Virtue, till he went to provide that was needful: that is, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven to prepare for her a dwelling place of everlasting joy, whereas she should dwell after the day of judgment with our Lord God in honour and glory.

But alas in the mean time came the Devil, and beguiled the wretched Soul by deadly sin, and so entred into the Castle of our heart, which should be the Castle of God. The Knight Jesus knocked at the Gate of our heart according to the Scripture, Lo, I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open that I may enter. But where the Devil is, God doth never enter, except the sinner will receive him by repentance, which seeing our Lord hanging upon the Cross, that we may see

## The History of

see his bloody wounds which he suffered for us. we sinners should be the rather mindful of his love: For from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet was left no whole place; therefore saith the Prophet Esay, Behold and see if any sorrow be like to my sorrow. Therefore he is a wretched man that will not be converted unto his Lord God, but lie still in deadly sin, wherefore when he is called before the high Judge, he shall be condemned to everlasting death. Therefore study we to open the doors of our hearts by fruitful faith in Almighty God, and then without doubt we shall obtain everlasting life. Unto which bring us our Lord Jesus. Amen.

## The Argument.

The Body and Soul of man being made by Gods grace the Temple of the holy Ghost, do give themselves to serve and please God in this life, and to love God and the Neighbours according to his laws; and though the body by death suffer mortal affliction for a time, yet by faith, hope, and charity in Jesus Christ, both body and soul shall inherit life and joy everlasting.

## The 44 History.

**I**T is read of a certain Roman Emperour which erecting for himself a goodly Monument



ment or Tomb, as the Labourers digged in the ground of his Palace they found a Coffin of Gold bound about with three Hoops, and upon the Hoops was engraven these words, I have spent, I have given, I have kept: I have had, I now have lost, I am punished. That which I had I spent, that which I gave I have. When the Emperoz saw this, he called together his Nobles and States, and said unto them, My Lords, go and consider among your selves what this inscription meaneth; unto whom the Nobles shortly after returned this short answer, saying, the meaning of this inscription is no other but this: There was a certain Emperoz your Predecessor which desired to leave behind him an example to others, that they might follow him in good life and conversation, viz. I have spent my life in judging others righteously, and governing my self according to the rules of reason; I have given to my Souldiers things necessary, unto poor maintenance and living, and to every one as to my self, according to their deserts. I have kept in all my works, righteousness, mercy to them that need it, and to workmen their worthy wages; I have had a liberal and a constant heart to every one that serveth me: I have given riches in their necessity, and loving favour at all times. I have had a hand to tame and subdue enemies, to protect and defend

## The History of

defend friends, to punish offenders. I have lost, foolishness, the friendship of enemies, and lust, or lasciviousness of the flesh. I am punished, now by death, because I believed not as I ought to have done, in one God eternal. I am punished, I say alas, because I cannot redeem my self, but by the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the World. When the Emperoz aforesaid heard the meaning of the inscriptions wisely interpreted on this manner, and how long that deceased Emperoz had lived, he thereby governed himself and his Subjects more providentially, and ended his life in Gods peace, with much honour.

## The Moral.

Dear friends, this Emperoz may be called every good Christian man or woman, which ought, and is bound to erect and reedifie a Tomb, that is, his heart prepared unto God, that he may perform his will above all things: and so diggeth in the ground of his heart by contrition and sorrowful repentance for his sins, that he doth find a Golden Coffin, that is, a body dead to sin, his Soul garnished with Virtues by Gods grace granted to the same, and bound about with three Golden Hoops, viz. with Faith, Hope, and Charity. What then was engraven in the same three Hoops? First, I have spent: where it may be asked what  
what

what hast thou spent: the good Christian answereth, body and soul in the service of God: if any of you bestow this temporal life in, he shall be assured of great reward, even of life everlasting. The second inscription is, I have kept: what hast thou kept: The good Christian answereth, a contrite and humble heart, and prepared unto God, to do whatsoever his good pleasure was. The third inscription is, I have given: what hast thou given: The good Christian answereth: Love unto God with all my Heart, with all my Soul, and with all my mind: and love unto my Neighbour, according to the commandment of God. The fourth inscription is, I have had: what hast thou had: The good Christian answereth and saith, surely a wretched life, because I was conceived in sin, and born in iniquity, and also was formed of vile and base matter. Fifthly, what is the inscription, I now have? The good Christian answereth by Baptism, and thereby am made the Soldier of Christ, by virtues which God gave me in my Baptism: whereas before I was the bondslave of Satan. Sixthly, what is that inscription, I have lost? To this answereth the good Christian, surely the favour of God, by mine own deserts: yet all the sins which I have committed against God, I have by repentance corrected and amended: because

repen-

repentance is one mean, but Christs merits chiefly and especially cleanse us from all sin. Seventhly, what is that inscription, I am punished? The good Christian answereth, and saith, Because I am afflicted by death for the offences and sins of my life. Eighthly, what is that inscription, I have spent that which I had? To this answereth the good Christian saying, I have bestowed all my life time here in works of mercy, by the Grace which I received of my Lord Jesus Christ. Ninthly, what is that inscription, That which I gave I have? Surely in all my temporal life I gave all my counsel, whole assent and will which I had to be the Servant of God, and now it is in the good will and pleasure of God, that I shall remain with him in joys of everlasting life in Heaven: unto the which bring us all. Amen.



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